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THE

TRAGEDIES

OF

ÆSCHYLUS

TRANSLATED

By R. POTTER.

THE SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED,

WITH NOTES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

THE noble author, with whoſe remaining tragedies the public is here preſented, was an Athenian of an honourable family, diſtinguiſhed for the ſublimity of his genius and the ardor of his martial ſpirit. In his youth he had read Homer with the warmeſt enthuſiaſm; and finding his great maſter unrivalled in the poſſeſſion of the Epic, he early conceived the deſign of creating a new province for himſelf,

and forming the Drama; ſo much we may be allowed to infer from the fable, that whilſt he was yet a boy Bacchus appeared to him as he lay aſleep in a vineyard, and commanded him to write tragedies. This noble deſign he ſoon executed, and before the twenty-fifth year of his age began to entertain his countrymen with repreſentations worthy of an Athenian audience. He had purſued theſe ſtudies about ten years, when Darius invaded Greece. His generals, Datis and Artaphernes, with an army of two hundred thouſand foot and ten thouſand horſe were now advanced to the plains of Marathon, diſtant only ten miles from Athens. The danger, which threatened his country, called forth the martial ſpirit of our poet; and very honourable mention is made of him, and his two brothers, Cynægirus and Amynias,

Amynias, for their eminent valour in that battle: to have wanted courage on ſuch an occaſion would have been a mark of the moſt abject baſeneſs; but to be diſtinguiſhed in an action, where every ſoldier was an hero, is a proof of ſuperior merit: in a picture repreſenting the battle of Marathon the pourtrait of Æſchylus was drawn: this was all the honour that Miltiades himſelf received from the ſtate for his glorious conduct on that day; he was placed at the head of the ten commanders, and drawn in the act of encouraging the ſoldiers and beginning the battle.

Some time after, Cynægirus was one of the four naval commanders, who, with an armament of one thouſand Grecians, defeated thirty thouſand Perſians; but he loſt his life in the action.

Ten years after the battle of Marathon, when Xerxes made that immenſe preparation to revenge the defeat of his father, we find the two ſurviving brothers exerting their courage in the ſea-fight off Salamis: here Amynias, too boldly laying hold of a Perſian ſhip, had his hand lopped off with a ſabre; but Æſchylus defended him, and ſaved his life; and the Athenians decreed him the firſt honours, becauſe he was the firſt to attack the commander of the Perſian fleet, ſhattered the ſhip to pieces, and killed the Satrap. It is obſerved that the two brothers were ever after inſeparable. The following year Æſchylus acquired freſh glory in the battle of Platæa, where the brave Perſian Mardonius was defeated and ſlain.

Having

Having taken this active part in three the moſt memorable battles that grace the annals of Greece, and diſtinguiſhed himſelf as a good citizen and a brave man, he returned with ardor to his former ſtudies, and completed his deſign of making the Drama a regular, noble, and rational entertainment. He wrote about ſeventy tragedies, and was in great eſteem with his countrymen: but upon ſome diſguſt in the latter part of his life he retired from Athens to the court of Hiero king of Sicily, where about three years after he died in the ſixty-ninth year of his age. The cauſe of this diſguſt is variouſly related: ſome impute it to his impatience of the riſing fame of Sophocles, yet a young man, to whom the prize was adjudged againſt him; others to the preference given to the Elegies of Simonides written in ho-

nour of thoſe, who fell in the field of Marathon.

But to have excelled in Elegy could have added no glory to the ſuperior genius of Æſchylus: neither does it appear probable that ſuch a conteſt ſhould have happened thirty years after the battle was fought. From the other charge one would wiſh to vindicate ſo great a name; and happily it carries its own confutation with it; for whether Sophocles was only ſeven or ſeventeen years younger than Æſchylus, which is not preciſely determined, he could not be a young man when the other was ſixty-four; and we know that the prize was adjudged to the laſt exhibition of Æſchylus, which conſiſted of his Agamemnon, the Choephoræ, the Furies, and a ſatyric piece. But the tragedy of

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the Furies gave great offence to the city; and the poet, whether for that or on ſome other pretence, was accuſed of impiety. His brother Amynias pleaded his cauſe: the Athenians were ſtruck with this inſtance of fraternal affection, they reverenced their maimed veteran, and Æſchylus was acquitted. But ſuch a ſpirit was not formed to ſubmit to the affront; it made too deep an impreſſion to be effaced; and the poet quitted the city with great indignation, declaring with a noble pride that he would entruſt his tragedies to poſterity, certain that he ſhould receive from thence the honour he deſerved. This honour the Athenians ſoon paid to his noble works: by a decree of the ſenate, never granted to any other, they offered rewards to any man that ſhould again exhibit his plays; they frequently adjudged

the prize to him after his deceaſe, and acknowledged him *the Father of Tragedy*.

To comprehend the juſtneſs of this honorable appellation, and to form a preciſe idea of the originality of Æſchylus, it will be neceſſary to trace the Tragic Muſe from her birth to her yet infirm ſtate when this poet gave her ſtrength, ſpirit, and dignity.— The ſtory has been told, it ſeems, twenty times already; let it not give offence if it be told once more: it ſhall be a ſhort tale. Tragedy then was at firſt no more than a ruſtic ſong in honour of Bacchus, attending the ſacrifice of a goat, an animal hated by the God becauſe its bite is particularly hurtful to the vine. What was originally no more than an accidental frolic became an annual cuſtom, next a public ſacrifice, and thence

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an eſtabliſhed rite; for as every thing in Pagan antiquity was ſacred, ſports and amuſements were changed into feaſts, and the temples were converted into theatres: but this by due degrees. The Grecians, advancing in poliſhed manners, carried into their towns a feaſt that ſprung from the leiſure of the country: their beſt poets took a pride in compoſing theſe religious hymns to the honour of Bacchus, and embelliſhed them with the agreeable entertainments of muſic and dancing. After a length of time, the ſongs advancing in perfection, it was found neceſſary to give the ſinger ſome relief; and that the company might be amuſed during the pauſes of the muſic, an actor was introduced: his part could be no other than a ſingle ſpeech, ſetting forth that he repreſented Hercules, or Theſeus,

or

or ſome other hero of antiquity, and had performed ſuch or ſuch an illuſtrious achievement: at the next pauſe another perſonated character advanced; at the next, another; but each unrelated and unconnected with the other. This we imagine to be the ſtate of things, till Theſpis and Phrynicus had the addreſs to continue the ſame interlocutor through every pauſe of the muſic, and to make him the narrator of one uniform and continued ſtory. The novelty had the good fortune to pleaſe; and as the ſtories were intereſting, the ſongs in honour of Bacchus ceaſed to amuſe, till by degrees they loſt their original deſign, and took their colouring from the intermediate repreſentation. Such was the rude ſtate of Tragedy, when Æſchylus conceived the great deſign of forming it into a new

ſpecies

ſpecies of poetry that ſhould rival even the Epic in dignity. The humble arbor interwove with vine branches gave place to ſcenes of aſtoniſhing grandeur; the actor, no longer mounted on the cart of Theſpis with his face ſmeared over with lees of wine, or covered with a maſk formed from the bark of a tree, now trod a ſpacious ſtage, magnificently habited in a robe of honour and the ſtately buſkin; even the maſk, that eternal diſgrace of the Athenian theatre, wore a new and elegant form expreſſive of the character repreſented. But theſe exterior decorations were proofs only of the taſte of Æſchylus: his ſuperior genius appeared in giving life to the piece, by introducing the dialogue, without which there could be no action; and from this circumſtance it is that he is with the higheſt propriety

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called the Father of the Drama. It is commonly ſaid that Æſchylus never produced more than two ſpeakers upon the ſtage at the ſame time; there are proofs to the contrary, though he generally adhered to that ſimple plan: but the new part, which the Chorus now took, amply ſupplied what we ſhould call that poverty of the ſtage.

The Muſic and the Dance could not, without infinite offence, be withdrawn from the gay and lively Athenians: Æſchylus therefore retained the Ode and Muſic, which properly ſpeaking conſtituted the original Tragedy; but he adapted it to his plan, and intereſted it in the action; thereby giving an unity of deſign to the whole, an agreeableneſs and ſplendor to the ſpectacle, and adding the force and ſpirit of Lyric Poetry

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to the gravity and magnificence of the Tragic ſtile: but ſuch was the ſimplicity of ancient manners, ſupported by truth and decency, that the Chorus yet retained the moral and ſacred air of the firſt inſtitution; hence we find it always grave, ſententious, ſublime, and ardent in the cauſe of liberty, virtue, and religion.

Æſchylus had ſtudied Homer with attention and judgment; from him he might learn propriety and dignity of character, ſublimity of conception, and magnificence of expreſſion: and it was impoſſible for him not to obſerve the neceſſity of building his plan upon one great and intereſting action; but in this nature and good ſenſe preſcribed a different conduct to the Tragic and the Epic poet. In the cloſet the mind may be agreeably entertained by the Epic muſe,

muſe, whilſt ſhe leads us backwards and forwards through the various fortunes of her hero, and ſometimes makes excurſions in purſuit of incidental adventures; whilſt the imagination loves to attend her in her flights, and diſdains to be confined by the narrow limits of time and place. But where the poetic imitation is made by action, and repreſented at once to the eye, a ſeverer diſcipline becomes neceſſary; that faithful monitor checks the rovings of fancy, exacts a ſober regard to unity of time and place, and demands a ſimpler plan: the good ſenſe of Æſchylus led him to obſerve this; and in alluſion to it he often uſed to ſay, with much modeſty, that his tragedies were only ſingle diſhes taken from the great feaſt of Homer.

But if the Tragic Muſe loſt any thing in the regions of imagination, ſhe found herſelf

herſelf amply recompenſed by the empire ſhe acquired over the paſſions; the imitation of nature is her province, as well as the Epic Muſe's; and this imitation is ſtronger and more perfect in action than in narration. Æſchylus, by introducing the Dialogue and engaging the Chorus in the intereſt of the Drama, gave birth to Action properly ſo called, and placed the Actors in ſuch a lively manner before the eyes of the ſpectators, that they ſuffered themſelves to be agreeably deceived, they forgot that the high-wrought ſcene was fictitious, and entered into the intereſts and paſſions of the perſons repreſented with real emotion. This alſo required a different conduct in the Tragic and the Epic Poet: the province of the latter is to inſtruct and delight; and he marches on to his end with a majeſtic pace through

through the extenſive regions of moral, paſſion, and deſcription: Æſchylus perceived that the Drama is confined to one point of place, and one point of time; that therefore its buſineſs is to advance with rapidity, and ſeize the heart at once: the paſſions then are its peculiar province. It is finely conceived by P. Brumoy that Æſchylus repreſented the Epos to his mind as a majeſtic queen ſeated on her throne, her brow ſhaded with clouds, but ſo as to diſcover great deſigns and wonderful revolutions: whilſt his ſtrong imagination figured tragedy as bathed in tears, her poignard in her hand, attended by terror and pity, preceded by deſpair, and followed by woe.

This great maſter was well acquainted with the human heart; he found it

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more averſe to miſery than deſirous of happineſs, and tremblingly alive to the ſhocks of fear, that gives us continual notice of the evils inſeparable from human life. Cloſely allied to this paſſion is another, that makes the heart recoil at the ſight of thoſe miſeries which befall another, and to which we are ourſelves equally liable. Terror and pity then are the ſtrongeſt, the moſt common, and therefore the moſt dangerous of all the paſſions; they overwhelm the human heart, render it incapable of bearing up againſt the repeated impreſſions of ills, and of diſcharging with a proper degree of firmneſs the neceſſary duties of life. To *purge* theſe paſſions, to take away their pernicious qualities, and preſerve whatever they have of uſeful, is the buſineſs in common of the philoſopher and the poet;

but theſe effect their ends by different means; the former applies himſelf to the underſtanding by the cool deductions of reaſon; the poet plays the paſſions againſt themſelves, expels terror by terror, and pity by pity, and makes the weapon, that gave the wound, perform the cure. The evils, of which we are either ſpectators or ſufferers in the larger theatre of human life, ſtrike the heart with a terror that cruſhes all its powers, or with a pity that diſſolves them: but in the mimic ſcene the poet by captivating the imagination has the addreſs to convey certain ſenſations of pleaſure, of which we cannot diveſt ourſelves, and thereby intereſts our attention to the fictitious ſcenes, ſpreading over the ſoul that moſt exquiſite of all its feelings, a calm dignity of grief that at once chaſtiſes and refines it, and thereby

thereby teaching the heart to ſupport its own afflictions with a manly fortitude, or to feel for the afflictions of others with a ſenſibility corrected by reaſon. Theſe are ſo evidently the effects of the ancient Drama, that they are from thence deduced as rules for its conſtruction; and to refuſe the great poet the honour of having this deſign in the plan of his tragedies, would be as violent an injuſtice as to deny that the great painter *, when he delineated the dying hero, intended to impreſs us with a reverence of his unſhaken fortitude, and to awake in our breaſts the paſſions of admiration, love, pity, and grief, which are ſo ſtrongly marked in the countenances and attitudes of his ſurrounding friends.

* Mr. Weſt, in his picture of the death of General Wolf.

Thus tragedy owes its exiſtence to the creative hand of Æſchylus: like his own Prometheus, he not only gave it being and form, but animated it with the brighteſt ray of ætherial fire; leaving poſterity to admire the force of his genius, and to doubt whether he was ever excelled, or even equalled, till our Shakeſpear aroſe bleſſed with an happier invention and more extenſive powers. It is pleaſant however to obſerve in what manner ſome writers, who would take it ill to be denied the firſt rank in criticiſm, ſpeak of this author. Sublimity of conception, magnificence of ſtyle, and the high tragic ſpirit they graciouſly allow him; in this they ſafely build upon the judgment of Longinus, Horace, and Quintilian, from whence there is no appeal: the ſame judgment had alſo pronounced

him

him ſometimes harſh and incorrect; and ſo, without adverting to the meaning of theſe great critics, that Longinus is ſpeaking of the boldneſs of his imagery, and Quintilian, as if commenting on Horace, of his ſtyle, which had not yet acquired its juſt accuracy and correctneſs, they carry the cenſure into the compoſition of his tragedies, which they repreſent as wild, irregular, and frequently fantaſtic; his plots, as rude and inartificial; his ſcenes, as unconnected and ill-placed; his characters, as ſtrongly marked, but *all* partaking of that wild fierceneſs which is the characteriſtic of the author. Some, and amongſt theſe are the beſt French critics, repreſent him as difficult, obſcure, and in ſome places ſcarcely to be underſtood: Another tells us that his thoughts riſe in a natural ſucceſſion;

that inſtead of being perplexed, one runs along with him, nay often before him: We are indeed gravely recommended to take his ſoul and genius, in ſome degree, along with us; that does not fall to the ſhare of every reader, nor of every critic; but to an Acumen, that finds no obſcurity in Lycophron, no wonder that Æſchylus is even familiar.

The amiable candor of a fine writer, who has joined an accurate taſte to the deepeſt penetration, and the fineſt ſenſibility to the moſt chaſtiſed judgment, teaches us thus to apologize for heaven-born genius, that acts from ſomething ſuperior and antecedent to rules: "Great "indulgence is due to the errors of ori-"ginal writers, who, quitting the beaten "track which others have travelled, "make daring incurſions into unexplo-

"red

" red regions of invention, and boldly
" ſtrike into the pathleſs ſublime: it is
" no wonder if they are often bewil-
" dered, ſometimes benighted: yet ſure-
" ly it is more eligible to partake the
" pleaſure and the hazard of their ad-
" ventures, than ſtill to follow the cau-
" tious ſteps of timid imitators through
" trite and common roads. Genius is
" of a bold enterpriſing nature, ill adapt-
" ed to the formal reſtraints of critic
" inſtitutions, or indeed to lay down to
" itſelf rules of nice diſcretion."—*Eſſay on the writings and genius of Shakeſpear.*——
But even this generous apology is ſeldom wanted for Æſchylus, except in his tragedy of Prometheus: there indeed the poet has given free ſcope to his unbounded imagination, and exerted the ſtrength and ardor of his genius with a wild and terrible magnificence; the

limits of this world were not ſufficient for his extenſive and daring ſpirit, but it made excurſions beyond the walks of mortal man: each perſonated character is a Divinity, and the illuſtrious ſufferer an ancient God of the high and haughty race of Titan, unworthily puniſhed for his benevolence, and præſcient that no ſubmiſſion could mitigate the ſeverity of his fate; here that horrid grandeur of the ſcene has a peculiar propriety; and the reader of taſte does not wiſh to ſee Prometheus abate any thing of that unconquerable ſpirit, with which he defies the Thunderer. In Æſchylus the ſublime is truely expreſſive of the elevation of his mind: born with a ſoul of fire, and animated with whatever is great and noble, all his ideas are magnificent and full of energy; what he conceived boldly he expreſſed with

with a correſpondent dignity of ſtyle; as his judgment informed him that manners in Tragedy would admit a ſtronger colouring than in the Epos, becauſe there every thing ſpeaks to the eye and the heart, ſo he gave it at once an higher tone and greater pomp of diction; this *perhaps* he has carried to an exceſs; his epithets are ſometimes harſh and turgid, and by endeavouring always to ſupport an elevation of ſtyle he has rendered it what P. Brumoy well expreſſes by "quelquefois giganteſque." But this is to be underſtood only of his diction: his images, with all their magnificence, never overſtep the modeſty of nature; they are indeed conceived with that inimitable fire, and expreſſed with ſuch a daring ſublimity, that it requires no ſmall portion of the high poetic ſpirit to attend him through his

his boundleſs flights; and this is one principal reaſon of that obſcurity which is complained of in his choral Odes: but to aſſert from hence that his figures often obſcure his ſenſe rather than enlighten it, is to ſpeak the language of taſteleſs criticiſm, that meditates its frigid lucubrations over the midnight lamp, leaving true genius, like the eagle, to ſoar undazzled by the blazing ſun when he "glows with unmitigated "day."

We have lately been told that if we conſider the ſtate of the Drama, when Æſchylus undertook to reform and improve it, we ſhall behold him with admiration; if we compare him with his two illuſtrious ſucceſſors, he hides his diminiſhed head, and appears far leſs conſpicuous. But this judgment was unknown

unknown to ancient Greece: the ſtate of Athens paid honours to Æſchylus, which never were granted to any other poet: Ariſtophanes, who certainly was not deficient in taſte, gave the preference to Æſchylus; and Lycurgus, to whom the poetic world is ſo greatly indebted, erected ſtatues alike to Æſchylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and ordered their tragedies to be tranſcribed and preſerved together. In pronouncing on their comparative merit, the beſt critics aſſign to Æſchylus the high tragic dignity, to Sophocles harmonious elegance, to Euripides the moral and pathetic. As the temper of the times muſt always have a great influence on the genius of their poets, we may in ſome meaſure account for this difference of character from the different ſtate of Athens in the periods when theſe three great

great writers compoſed their tragedies; for though they were cotemporaries, that is were all alive at the ſame time, yet the circumſtances of the public had in that ſhort time received a very conſiderable change. Whilſt Æſchylus was in the vigor of his age, the generous glow of liberty and the high martial ſpirit blazed out with the brighteſt ardor; it was ſucceſsful; and Athens was the proud ſcene of conqueſts, glories, triumphs, ſpoils: Æſchylus had borne an active and honorable part in theſe great engagements; his genius was naturally ſublime and daring; the ſpirit of the times called forth the ſpirit of the poet, was highly flattered by it, and in return received it with the greateſt pleaſure and warmeſt applauſe.—The penetrating writer, before cited in apologizing for the irregularities of

Shakeſpear,

Shakeſpear, has this fine remark, "If "perfect and faultleſs compoſition is "ever to be expected from human fa- "culties, it muſt be at ſome happy pe- "riod, when a noble and graceful ſim- "plicity, the reſult of well regulat- "ed and ſober magnanimity, reigns "through the general manners. Then "the Muſes and the Arts, neither effe- "minately delicate, nor audaciouſly "bold, aſſume their higheſt character, "and in all their compoſitions ſeem to "reſpect the chaſtity of the public taſte, "which would equally diſdain quaint- "neſs of ornament, or the rude neglect "of elegance and decorum. Such pe- "riods had Greece!" And ſuch was the preciſe period in which Sophocles wrote: the high national ſpirit had as yet ſuffered no abatement; but the war had now nothing dangerous or peculiarly intereſting

intereſting in it; and Athens was at leiſure to cultivate the fine arts with a greater degree of exactneſs, and to give them a poliſh and perfection unknown to more buſy and tumultuous times: hence the correct and elegant Sophocles. The Athenians had now an opportunity in the calm of peace to enjoy the riches which they had acquired in the Perſian war; nor were they of a diſpoſition to neglect the enjoyment: this of courſe brought on a greater refinement of taſte, and a ſofter delicacy of ſentiment; but the ancient ſimplicity of manners was not yet corrupted; it only became more elegant, and formed the pathetic Euripides, the greateſt maſter of the tender paſſions: and happily for the cauſe of virtue the chaſte and philoſophic friend of Socrates might well be truſted with his empire over them.

them. If then the glorious ſcenes of war and conqueſt were peculiarly favorable to the bold and firey genius of Æſchylus, " the period, when Sophocles and Euripides wrote, was that in which the fine arts and polite literature were in a degree of perfection, which ſucceeding ages have emulated in vain," till an amiable writer of our own, by an happy effort of " heaven-born genius" regulated by the moſt chaſtiſed judgment, united the powers of the three illuſtrious Grecians, and has charmed us with the tenderneſs of Euripides in Elfrida, with the force of Æſchylus, and the correctneſs and harmony of Sophocles in Caractacus, adding from his own ſtores a richneſs and a grace with which the ſeverity of the Athenian Drama was unacquainted.

Notwith-

Notwithſtanding the acknowledged merit of this truely original writer, he ſeems to have been little ſtudied even by the learned of theſe later ages: of all our other poets Milton and Mr. Gray are the only two that have imitated his manner, and caught the fire of his genius; unleſs we may add to them our ſublime Collins. A minute examination of the particular images, which theſe noble writers may ſeem to have glanced at in Æſchylus, would be equally uncandid and invidious; it is more agreeable and more juſt to obſerve, that from whatever ſparks they kindled "the Muſes Veſtal Fires," they had genius of their own to "fan them to "that dazzling blaze of ſong," which muſt always make them the glory of Engliſh Poetry.

Thoſe

Thoſe who are beſt acquainted with Æſchylus in the original language, will be moſt ſenſible of the difficulties of preſenting him properly to the Engliſh reader; the Tranſlator ſaw and felt them enough. In a language, that has ſo long ceaſed to be ſpoken, many peculiar elegances muſt eſcape even thoſe that read it with the greateſt accuracy; and many of thoſe, which are obſerved, will neceſſarily loſe the richneſs of their colouring, when copied into another language: and this muſt always be the caſe where the whole beauty depends upon the choice and arrangement of words and ſyllables conſtituting an inimitable harmony of expreſſion. "Un "tour en toute langue (ſays the excel- "lent Brumoy) vaut ſouvent une pen- "ſée, et en eſt véritablement une. Mais "c'eſt une mine qui fond, une phantôm

" qui s'evanoüit, ou du moins une fleur " qui ſe fanne dans une langue étran- " gére." There are many inſtances of this in the choral Odes: theſe too are often ſo difficult, that the Tranſlator cannot flatter himſelf that he has always reached the prèciſe meaning of the original, though directed by the penetrating ſagacity of the very learned Pauw, to whom he moſt gratefully acknowledges the higheſt obligations: and, what is particularly to be lamented, even theſe ſmall remains of Æſchylus have come down to us ſo injured by the depredations of time, that in many paſſages the happieſt conjecture is the beſt criticiſm. Yet the Tranſlator was not diſcouraged: he had an ambition to preſent this noble author to the Engliſh reader, and flattered himſelf that his attempt would be acceptable

to

to the public: animated with this pleaſing hope he undertook and went through the arduous work; but when he reflects upon the generous encouragement he has met with from ſo many perſons of the higheſt rank, as well as of the firſt reputation in literature, he thinks it the trueſt mark of reſpect, and the beſt thanks for the honour they have done him, to aſſure them that he trembles whilſt he publiſhes what he wrote with ardor; trembles leſt the tranſlation ſhould be falſe to his own wiſhes, and unworthy of their patronage: his wiſhes are to pleaſe; and in a work of ſuch difficulty there is ſome degree of merit even in the attempt; and this is all he preſumes to claim. Should he however be ſo happy as to ſucceed, and be thought to deſerve the approbation of the public, to which he now with

the greateſt diffidence appeals, this will animate him with the moſt ſanguine hope of further ſucceſs in the long promiſed tranſlation of Euripides; to that he now returns. If an apology for theſe ſtudies be neceſſary in reſpect to his years and profeſſion, he begs leave to make it in the words of Tully, "Ego vero fateor, me his ſtudiis eſſe deditum. Ceteros pudeat, ſiqui ita ſe litteris abdiderunt, ut nihil poſſint ex his neque ad communem afferre fructum, neque in adſpectum lucemque proferre. Me autem quid pudeat, qui tot annos ita vivo, ut ab nullius unquam me tempore aut commodum, aut otium meum abſtraxerit, aut Voluptas avocarit, aut denique Somnus retardarit? Quare quis tandem me reprehendat, aut quis mihi jure ſuccenſeat, ſi, quantum ceteris ad ſuas res obeundas,

quantum

quantum ad feſtos dies ludorum celebrandos, quantum ad alias Voluptates, et ad ipſam requiem animi et corporis conceditur temporum: quantum alii tribuunt tempeſtivis conviviis: quantum denique aleæ, quantum pilæ; tantum mihi egomet ad hæc ſtudia recolenda ſumpſero?"—PRO ARCHIA POETA.

SCARNING,
September 8, 1777.

TO

Mrs. MONTAGU.

MADAM,

WHEN you firſt expreſſed to me your deſire, that notes explanatory of the ancient mythology, hiſtory, and cuſtoms, might be added to the tranſlation of Æſchylus, it ſurpriſed me that you, who certainly want notes as little as any perſon alive, ſhould be the firſt to aſk for them; and I wiſhed to be excuſed from the taſk, as con-

ſcious to myſelf that, though I might be ſo happy as to entertain the Public, I could have no pretenſions to inſtruct it, not preſuming to think, that I know more than every one knows, or at leaſt ought to know: your politeneſs would not admit my plea, but you perſevered in your requeſt; I might more properly call it your command, for as ſuch I ſhall always receive even an hint from Mrs. Montagu. In conſequence of this, I have now the honour of preſenting to you ſuch remarks, as occurred to me upon a careful review of my author; theſe may poſſibly be of ſervice to the leſs informed reader, and for ſuch notes in general, and even tranſlations, are principally intended: thus far all may be well; but *your* expectations muſt be diſappointed; for ſuch writing is not in its nature amuſing, and you want no in-

formation

formation which the writer is capable of giving.

I know your active mind wiſhes to penetrate through the allegorical covering, which the philoſophers, poets, and prieſts of ancient times threw over their phyſical, moral, and theological inquiries; but the boaſt of Iſis yet remains, and no mortal hath removed her veil. The misfortune is, almoſt all the monuments of Egyptian learning are loſt, and of the Egyptian Gods nothing remains but fable: the light, which we receive upon theſe ſubjects, is chiefly derived from the Greek writers, and this by no means pure; they were indeed enough acquainted with Egypt to acquire from thence a turn for mythologizing, but we may obſerve, that it did not always ſit eaſy upon

upon them; ill inſtructed in the antiquities of their own country, they have tranſmitted to us a confuſed heap of uncertain traditions; and theſe, by falling into the hands of the poets, are become ſtill more extravagant; the conſequence of which is, they have multiplied doubts, to which one would willingly prefer the moſt profound ignorance. You would be the more convinced of the juſtneſs and good ſenſe of this obſervation of the learned and excellent M. le Count Caylus, could you bear to read the celebrated treatiſe of Plutarch concerning Iſis and Oſiris, where you would find ſuch a mixture of hiſtory and fable, allegory and explication, reaſoning and abſurdity, as would deter you from further inquiry; yet Plutarch was one of the moſt learned and inquiſitive perſons of his age, and

in

in theſe reſearches he had means of information, which we can never have. Yet for our times theſe diſcoveries ſeem to have been reſerved; we have writers on mythology in abundance; and though they differ in their explications, yet they agree in an unclaſſical diſregard to antiquity and truth, and in a barbarous attempt to demoliſh all the monuments of Egypt and Greece, and with their materials ſome to repair the temple of Jeruſalem, ſome to build up ſyſtems of their own; theſe indeed are un peu bizarres, and what one of them ſays of the others, we may with equal reaſon apply to them all, "On cherche quelque lumiere, et l'on ne voit qu' amas indigeſte d'une vaſte erudition et l'abus le plus etrange des Langues, que l'on honora fauſſement du nom de Science etymologique."

And

And would you have me venture to tread this treacherous ſoil of mythology? Or have you a wiſh to ſee me pictured, like that great Myſtagogue, Alexander Roſs, in the temple of Apollo, my pontifical robe trailing on the pavement, my philoſophical beard waving over my breaſt, my front ploughed with many a deep remark, and a great church-door key in my hand, which after all opens to no knowledge?

But ſince, notwithſtanding my nolo epiſcopari, you have called me forth to the office of Hierophant, I muſt enter upon it by declaring, that whoever he be that wiſhes to give, or to form any rational idea of the mythology of the ancients, he muſt firſt acquaint himſelf with the religion of the earlieſt ages, its progreſſive corruption through the

the three greater ſpecies of idolatry, and their mode of repreſenting things by hieroglyphic characters; for from hence aroſe this marvellous entaſſement of mythology, ſymbol, and allegory.

Religion is natural to the human mind, and when the early ages had ſunk to that miſerable blindneſs as to loſe ſight of the true God, who revealed himſelf to their firſt progenitor, they looked up to the Heavens, and ſtruck with admiration of the nature of the univerſe, ſuppoſed the Sun and Moon to be the eternal and firſt Gods. The voice of antiquity is uniform in this; the earlieſt account we have is from the Fragment of Sanchoniatho, which tells us, that[a] Æon and Protogonus in times

[a] Αἰῶνα καὶ Πρωτόγονον αὐχμῶν γενομένων τὰς χεῖρας ὀρέγειν εἰς ἀρανὴς προς τὸν ἥλιον. τοῦτον γὰρ, φησὶ, θεὸν ἐνόμιζον μόνον ἀρανῆ κύριον.

of

of drought ſtretched their hands to the Heavens towards the Sun; for this they eſteemed as God the ſole lord of the Heaven. As Diodorus Siculus tells us the ſame thing of the Egyptians, ſo Herodotus gives us a ſimilar account of the ancient [b] Perſians and Libyans; this Hyde calls the firſt interpolation: and Plato [c] ſays, that the earlieſt Grecians worſhipped the Sun, and the Moon, and the Earth, and the Stars, and the Heaven, as many barbarians do now. Thus elementary worſhip was the firſt ſpecies of idolatry.

When men were drawn from a ſavage life to the more civilized ſtate of ſociety, thoſe virtues

[b] Θύουσι δὲ Ἡλίῳ καὶ Σελήνῃ μούνοισι· τούτοισι μὲν νυν πάντες Λίβυες θύουσι.—L. iv. c. 188.

[c] In Cratylo.

(Or

(Or in arts, or arms
Diffuſing bleſſings, or averting harms,)

which had made a prince the father of his people, induced them out of gratitude and reverence to deify him after his deceaſe, and to pay him divine honours: thus Sanchoniatho tells us, that [d] when Hypſiſtus was killed by wild beaſts, he was deified, and his children made libations and ſacrifices to him. And in what other ſenſe can we underſtand Heſiod, when he ſpeaks of the ſacred race of the immortal Gods [e], which were born of the Earth;

[d] Ὕψιστος ἐκ συμβολῆς θηρίων τελευτήσας ἀφιερώθη, ᾧ καὶ θεὸς καὶ θυσίας οἱ παῖδες ἐτελέσαν.

[e] Κλείετε δ' ἀθανάτων ἱερὸν γένος αἰὲν ἐόντων,
Οἱ Γῆς ἐξεγένοντο.—V. 104.

Γαῖα δέ τοι πρῶτον μὲν ἐγείνατο σὸν ἑαυτῇ
Οὐρανὸν ἀστερόεντ', ἵνα μιν περὶ πάντα καλύπτοι,
Ὄφρ' εἴη μακάρεσσι θεοῖς ἕδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεί.—V. 125.

and

and of the Earth as producing the Heaven, that it might be the ſeat of the immortal Gods? Tully in the firſt book of his Tuſculan Diſputations, arguing for the exiſtence of the ſoul after death, proves from the pontifical law, and the inviolable ceremonies of ſepulture, that death is not a privation of being, but a migration of life, which leads illuſtrious perſons to the ſkies; he inſtances in Romulus, and ſays, that Rome derived this opinion from Greece; that not only Hercules, Bacchus, Caſtor, and Pollux, Leucothea, and their own Matuta, but that even the Dii majorum gentium would be found, by tracing the antiquities of Greece, to have been advanced from mortals to be Gods. Yet M. Court de Gebelin could aſſure us, that antiquity never deified dead men. "On a pretendu qu'ils avoient etabli-pour faire voir

voir que ces Dieux etoient tous des hommes qui avoient été déïfiés à cauſe des ſervices qu' ils avoient rendus au genre humain. Mais il faudroit pour que cela pût être adopté, qu'on en trouvât de preuves dans l'Antiquité, ce qui eſt impoſſible, l'Antiquité n' ayant jamais déïfié des hommes."—MONDE PRIMITIF, p. 311.—Whatever antiquity has done in this caſe, his ſyſtem required that it ſhould not have done it; and what can ſtand before a ſyſtem?

Yon' golden ſun blazing in all its ſplendor, the ſilver regent of the night, the canopy of Heaven ſpangled with ſtars, the violence of the winds, the immenſity of the ocean, might aſtoniſh the minds of untutored barbarians: and if one ſhould be inclined to forgive them for adoring the thundering Jupi-

ter, the majeſtic Juno, the elegant Apollo, the accompliſhed Minerva, the beautiful Venus, the Muſes and the Graces, and ſuch other of their deities as ſhowed their fine taſte at leaſt, if not their good ſenſe; yet what ſhall we ſay to their Divine Bull, their Divine Heifer, their dog-headed Anubis, and all that herd of monſters which diſgraced the religion of Egypt? Yet ſuch was the depravation of the human mind, that having loſt its ſenſe of the true God, it firſt fixed on elementary worſhip, then deſcended to human, and at laſt ſunk to brutal; though, in juſtice to the inventors of this third ſpecies of idolatry, we muſt obſerve, that the animal itſelf was not originally worſhipped, but its figure as ſymbolical of the other two ſpecies. This certainly took its riſe from the Egyptian hieroglyphics, which

which were prior to alphabetic writing, and repreſented one thing by another: thus horns were the ſymbol of power; hence[f] Hermes placed on the head of Iſis an helmet formed with the horns of a Bull: and an heifer being in Egypt the well-known ſymbol of Fertility, this their tutelary Goddeſs is repreſented ſometimes as a moſt beautiful woman with the horns of an heifer, ſometimes with the head of an heifer, and ſometimes intirely as an heifer. Hence the Iö of the Grecians.

But a practice, which naturally enough took its riſe from this mode of repreſentation, was afterwards encouraged by the prieſts with a different view: as mankind grew more inqui-

[f] Ἑρμὴν δὲ περιθεῖναι βούκρανον αὐτῇ (Ἴσιδι) κράνος. De Iſide et Oſiride.

ſitive and more enlightened, they had reaſon to fear, that the origin of their hero gods might be detected, which would of courſe greatly weaken the veneration in which they were held, and have a tendency to ſubvert the public religion; but the ſymbolic worſhip, by adding myſtery to their theology, and keeping the truth out of ſight, would at leaſt ſupport, if not increaſe the veneration; therefore the more impenetrable the obſcurity was made, the better would its end be anſwered.

This end was likewiſe effected, and the people were more eaſily reconciled to hero-worſhip by another method, which led them to ſupport the new idolatry on the old, by giving the deified mortal the name of the planet, and inverſely by giving the planet the name

of

of the new god; thus Oſiris was the Sun, and the Sun was Oſiris. So Sanchoniatho tells us, that [e] Chronus, i. e. Saturn, after his deceaſe was hallowed into the planet of Saturn; and Plutarch ſays, that the Egyptian prieſts affirm that the bodies of the [h] Gods, ſuch as were not of immortal origin and incorruptible, were depoſited with them; but that their ſouls ſhined ſtars in the Heaven; ſome therefore expreſsly ſay, that Oſiris was the Sun, by the Greeks called Sirius; and that Iſis was the

[e] Κρόνος—εἰς τὸν τοῦ Κρόνου ἀστέρα καθιερωθείς.

[h] Οἱ δὲ ἱερεῖς λέγουσι τὰ τῶν θεῶν, ὅσοι μὴ ἀγέννητοι μηδὲ ἄφθαρτοι, σώματα παρ' αὐτοῖς κεῖσθαι κατόπτα καὶ θεραπεύεσθαι, τὰς δὲ ψυχὰς ἐν οὐρανῷ λάμπειν ἄστρα.—Εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ τὸν Ὄσιριν ἄντικρυς ἥλιον εἶναι καὶ ὀνομάζεσθαι Σείριον ὑφ' Ἑλλήνων λέγοντες: τὴν δ' Ἶσιν οὐχ ἑτέραν τῆς σελήνης ἀποφαινοντες, ἐν γὰρ τῶν ἀγαλμάτων αὐτῆς, τὰ μὲν κεραςφόρα τοῦ μηνοειδοῦς γεγονέναι μιμήματα, τοῖς δὲ μελανοστόλοις ἐμφαινούσι τὰς κρύψεις καὶ τοὺς περισκιασμοὺς, ἐν οἷς διώκει ποθοῦσα τὸν ἥλιον.—De Iſide et Oſiride.

Moon, repreſented under both characters by the ſame image; that her horns were reſemblances of the Moon, and that ſhe was habited in a black ſtole, to denote her occultations, in which ſhe wanders ſeeking the Sun. I have ſomewhere ſeen an image of this Goddeſs, on which the horns are perfectly lunar, and ſo formed, that the blank diſc of the moon is faintly ſhadowed within their circle.

And now, Madam, your Hierophant having preſumed to conduct you through theſe probationary labours,

Obſcure thro' dreary ſhades, that lead
Along the waſte dominions of the dead:
As wander travellers in woods by night,
By the moon's doubtful and malignant light;
When Jove in duſky clouds involves the ſkies,
And the faint creſcent ſhoots by fits before their eyes. Æn. vi. DRYDEN.

You

You are prepared to enter the myſtic dome, where, I hope, you will not be alarmed at the various monſters that preſent themſelves before you; they are empty phantoms all,

Forms without bodies and impaſſive air.

Neither will you wonder to find them here: every thing is in its proper order. As the human mind advanced in knowledge, theſe ſymbolical repreſentations were too groſs to paſs upon the inquiſitive as proper objects of their religious adoration; the prieſts therefore, who were now deeply intereſted in the craft, and the vanity of philoſophizing, attempted to cover the abſurdity of theſe brute-figured deities, by pretending that they were mythological allegories, which veiled all the great truths of theology, ethics, and phyſics. Thus

Sanchoniatho, who had told us, that Taaut, the Egyptian Hermes, imitating Ouranus, formed the figures of the Gods in ſacred characters (where we find this deity the patron rather of the ingenious Carlini and the goddeſs-making Reynolds, than of Poor Robin and Vincent Wing), tells us alſo [1], that the ſon of Thabion, the earlieſt Phœnician Hierophant, allegorized all theſe things, and mixed them with phyſical and elementary ideas. In this ſtate they paſſed to the Grecians, whoſe volatile and inventive genius, added fable to mythology, and extravagance to allegory, till, as Mr. Bryant expreſſes it, " we find the

[1] Θεὸς Τάαυτος, μιμησάμενος τὸν Οὐρανόν, τῶν θεῶν ὄψεις, Κρόνῳ τε καὶ Δαγῶνος, καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν διετύπωσεν τοὺς ἱερους τῶν στοιχείων χαρακτῆρας.——Ταῦτα παντα ὁ Θαβίωνος παὶς πρῶτος τῶν ἀπ' αἰῶνος γεγονοτων Φοινίκων ἱεροφάντης ἀλλεγορήσας, τοῖς τε φυσικοῖς καὶ κοσμικοῖς παθεσιν ἀναμίξας.

whole

whole, like a groteſque picture, blazoned high, and glaring with colours, and filled with groups of fantaſtic imagery, ſuch as we ſee upon an Indian ſcreen; where the eye is painfully amuſed; but whence little can be obtained, which is ſatisfactory, and of ſervice." To endeavour to analyſe them, " c'etoit employer beaucoup trop d' erudition pour s'egarer." Let us make the attempt on Prometheus, and we ſhall ſoon ſee that M. Court de Gebelin had reaſon enough to make this reflection.

The Engliſh reader is now well acquainted with the hiſtory and character of Prometheus: Æſchylus indeed had the good ſenſe to omit the ſilly tale of the bull's hide and the bones; and Plato in his Protagoras, has told his ſtory in the moſt agreeable manner: but

where

where in hiſtory ſacred or profane, where in religion or in nature ſhall we find this worthy? Shall we draw him out of Noah's Ark? Shall we yoke him to the plough in Egypt, thence ſend him to a mountain to eſcape the inundation of the Nile, which overſpread his province rapid as an *Eagle*'s flight, in deſpair, till Hercules repaired the ravages, and taught the river to confine itſelf to its channel? Shall we find him on Mount Horeb in the perſon of Moſes? Or ſhall we take up with any one, or with all the fourteen interpretations of Alexander Roſs? The civilizing, oneirocritic, and medicinal arts, which he boaſts to have taught mankind, ſhow him to have been an Egyptian, they fix him to the age of Oſiris, they even mark him to be Oſiris himſelf; for he was the wiſe and benevolent civili-

zer,

zer[k], he reclaimed his Egyptians from their poor and ſavage life, he inſtructed them in agriculture, gave them laws, and taught them to honour the Gods. But his name, as well as that of his inconſiderate brother, is purely Greek; and probably he owes his civilizing qualities to the vanity of that people, who had a wonderful propenſity to claim to themſelves the invention of all the arts of poliſhed life. Had we nothing of his ſtory, but what is ſo elegantly related by Plato, we ſhould not heſitate to pronounce him an emblem of the Divine Providence in the formation of man; and as ſuch we muſt accept it, little doubting but that his chains, and the eagle preying on his

[k] Βασιλεύοντα δὲ Ὄσιριν Αἰγυπτίους μὲν εὐθὺς ἀπόρου βίου καὶ θηριώδους ἀπαλλάξαι, καρπους τε δείξαντα, καὶ νόμους θέμενον αὐτοις, καὶ θέους δείξαντα τιμᾶν.—Plutarch de Iſ. et Oſir.

heart,

heart, were wild and extravagant fables ſuperadded to the original ſober allegory: no uncommon practice this. Mr. Bryant well accounts for this, when he ſays, "The hiſtory of Prometheus was certainly taken from hieroglyhics miſunderſtood, and badly explained, at leaſt from the ſacred devices upon the entablatures of temples. Prometheus was worſhipped by the Colchians as a deity; and had a temple and high place called Typhæonia Petra upon Mount Caucaſus; the device upon the portal was Egyptian, an Eagle over an Heart; the Eagle and the Vulture were the inſignia of that country."—The Heart was another hieroglyphical character.—It were to be wiſhed, that this very ingenious and learned gentleman, had favoured us with his authority for this intereſting circumſtance; it would have been more

ſatiſ-

ſatisfactory to his readers, though his fidelity cannot be ſuſpected: it were alſo to be wiſhed, that he had ſtopped here; for beyond this we have no ſupport from antiquity; neither reaſon nor religion can account for a ſtory ſo inconſiſtent with both; and of conjectures we have enough: but the ſpirit of mythologizing is gone forth, and all fleſh is humbled in its ſight; gods and men, heaven and earth, the air and the ſea, theology, phyſics, and ethics, and all the monuments of antiquity fall before it;

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the reſounding ſhore,
A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament;
From haunted ſpring and dale,
Edg'd with poplar pale,
The parting genius is with ſighing ſent;

With

With flow'r-inwoven treſſes torn
The Nymphs in twilight ſhade of tangled
thickets mourn, &c.

I promiſed that I would introduce the daughter of Inachus to your acquaintance; and if I have been ſo happy as to explain this one mythological character, it has been by a ſober attention to antiquity, under the guidance of a right reverend author, whoſe comprehenſive genius has fathomed all the depths of literature. Could I have found any further ſupport from antiquity, any rational ground on which to follow my inquiries, I ſhould have been equally happy to have been able to give you ſatisfaction with regard to the other myſterious perſonages mentioned by Æſchylus: inſtead of this you will give me leave to put you off with a ſtory.

As

As Socrates one evening was walking with his friend Phædrus on the banks of the Ilyſſus, the young man aſked whether that was the place whence Boreas was ſaid to have carried off the virgin Orithyia: being ſhown the place a little lower down the ſtream, where an altar to Boreas yet ſtood, he ſays, But tell me, I conjure you, Socrates, are you perſuaded that this mythological narration is true? If I ſhould diſbelieve it, as wiſe men do, the philoſopher replies, I ſhould not be guilty of any great abſurdity; then I ſhould ſhow my acuteneſs, and ſay that the violence of the north-wind drove her down thoſe rocks as ſhe was playing with Pharmacia, and that, periſhing there, ſhe was ſaid to have been carried away by Boreas. Thoſe things, my Phædrus, on ſome accounts, I think agreeable, but they are the inquiries

quiries of a ſtudious, laborious man, and of one not perfectly happy; if for no other reaſon, yet for this, that he would then be under a neceſſity of adjuſting the form of the Centaurs, and next of the Chimæra; then flows in a multitude of Gorgons and Pegaſus's, and ſuch like beings inexplicable for their numbers, and monſtrous in their abſurdity. If any one, who has no faith in theſe, ſhould attempt to give a ſolution of each form, though in no elegant manner, he would find it a work that requires much leiſure: but I have no leiſure for ſuch things: the reaſon, my friend, is this; I am not yet able, according to the Delphic injunction, to know myſelf; and it would be ridiculous for me, whilſt I am ignorant of this, to be inveſtigating things foreign to my own buſineſs and boſom: where-

fore

fore bidding farewell to theſe things, and ſubmitting to what is determined concerning them, I conſider what I lately mentioned, not ſuch ſubjects, but myſelf, whether I am a monſter more multiform and more firey fierce than Typhon, or a tamer and more ſimple animal, in my nature partaking of ſome divine and gentle portion.—PLATO'S PHÆDRUS.

Socrates tells us, that theſe inquiries are not the taſk of a very happy man: the Athenian philoſopher had his reaſons for ſaying this, but they affect not us: I ſhould be very happy if my inquiries could produce any thing worthy your attention, the ſtudy and the labour I ſhould think well employed. And now, Madam, you ſee how little you are to expect from theſe notes; yet ſuch as they are, as they were written by

your command, to you they are dedicated; as your candor has induced you to approve the tranſlation, I can with the better grace preſume to dedicate that alſo to you: the approbation of Mrs. Montagu is the higheſt honour any writer can receive; I am not inſenſible to it; and whilſt I thus boaſt of it to the Public, let me expreſs my humbleſt thanks to you for it.

I am, Madam, with the greateſt reſpect,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

SCARNING,
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PROME-

PROMETHEUS CHAIN'D.

PROMETHEUS CHAIN'D.

ÆSCHYLUS wrote three Tragedies on the ſtory of Prometheus: the firſt exhibited him as carrying the ſacred gift of fire to men; the ſecond as chained to Caucaſus; the third as delivered from his chains. Of theſe the ſecond only remains to us. The ſhort account, which Prometheus gives in this of the barbarous ſtate of man before he taught them the civilizing arts, makes us regret the loſs of the firſt; and we have good reaſon to imagine that the portrait of Hercules in the third, delineated by this great maſter,

muſt have been inimitable. There is in this remaining drama a ſublimity of conception, a ſtrength, a fire, a certain ſavage dignity peculiar to this bold writer. The ſcenery is the greateſt that the human imagination ever formed: the wild and deſolate rock frowning over the ſea, the ſtern and imperious ſons of Pallas and Styx holding up Prometheus to its rifted ſide whilſt Vulcan fixes his chains, the Nymphs of the Ocean flying to its ſummit to commiſerate his unhappy ſtate, old Oceanus on his hippogriff, the appearance of Iö, the deſcent of Mercury, the whirlwind tearing up the ſands, ſwelling the boiſterous ſea, and daſhing its waves to the ſtars, the vollied thunders rolling all their firey rage againſt the rock, and the figure of Prometheus unappalled at this terrible ſtorm, and bidding defiance to Jupiter, would require the utmoſt effort of Salvator Roſa's genius to repreſent them. Yet is the horrid greatneſs of this drama tempered with much tenderneſs; the reluctance of Vulcan to execute the ſevere commands of Jupiter is finely contraſted to the eager unfeeling inſolence of Strength and Force; the character of Iö is mournfully gentle; and the Oceanitidæ are of a moſt amiable mild-

neſs

neſs joined to a firm but modeſt prudence; even the untameable ferocity of Prometheus diſcovers under it a benevolence that intereſts us deeply in his ſufferings.

Perſons of the Drama.

STRENGTH AND FORCE.

VULCAN.

PROMETHEUS.

OCEANUS.

IO.

MERCURY.

CHORUS.

NYMPHS OF THE OCEAN.

PROMETHEUS CHAIN'D.

STRENGTH, FORCE, VULCAN, PROMETHEUS[a].

STRENGTH.

AT length then to the wide earth's extreme bounds,
To Scythia are we come, thoſe pathleſs wilds
Where human footſtep never mark'd the ground.
Now,

[a] According to the theogony of Heſiod, Chaos was the anceſtor of Nature; next to him was Gaia: her progeny by Ouranus was numerous, amongſt theſe were Oceanus and Japetus: by Clymene, daughter of Oceanus, Japetus was the father of Prometheus, with whoſe hiſtory the Athenians were well acquainted from the narrative of Heſiod, which was, we may ſuppoſe, the popular creed of the times in

Now, Vulcan, to thy taſk; at Jove's command
Fix to theſe high-projecting rocks this vain
Artificer of man; each maſſy link
Draw cloſe, and bind his adamantine chains.
Thy radiant pride, the firey flame, that lends
Its aid to ev'ry art, he ſtole, and bore
The gift to mortals; for which bold offence
The gods aſſign him this juſt puniſhment;
That he may learn to reverence the pow'r
Of Jove, and moderate his love to man.

which our poet wrote. The Engliſh reader is by this time as well acquainted with this ſtrange ſtory.

STRENGTH AND FORCE.

Theſe two allegorical perſonages were of high antiquity and illuſtrious birth, the ſons of Pallas and Styx. Coeus, the ſon of Ouranus and Gaia, was the father of Pallas by Eurybia, daughter of Pontus and Gaia: Styx was the daughter of Oceanus and Tethys. When Jupiter aſſembled the gods on Olympus, and declared his gracious intention to reward and honour each that ſhould be auxiliary to him in his wars againſt the Titans, Styx, by the advice of her father, was the firſt that attended him, leading with her theſe her two ſons; Jupiter received her with great reſpect, appointed her to be the ſacred oath of the gods, and admitted her ſons to be conſtant attendants on his own perſon. Heſiod. Theog. v. 400.

VULCAN.

VULCAN.

Stern pow'rs, your harſh commands have here an end,
Nor find reſiſtance. My leſs hardy mind,
Averſe to violence, ſhrinks back, and dreads
To bind a kindred god to this wild cliff,
Expos'd to ev'ry ſtorm: but ſtrong conſtraint
Compells me; I muſt ſteel my ſoul, and dare:
Jove's high commands require a prompt obſervance.
High-thoughted ſon of truth-directing Themis [b],
Thee with indiſſoluble chains, perforce,
Muſt I now rivet to this ſavage rock,
Where neither human voice, nor human form
Shall meet thine eye, but parching in the beams,
Unſhelter'd, of yon' fervid ſun, thy bloom
Shall loſe its grace, and make thee wiſh th' approach
Of grateful evening mild, whoſe duſky ſtole
Spangled with gems ſhall veil his firey heat;

[b] Themis was one of the moſt antient and reſpectable deities, the daughter of Ouranus and Gaia, that is of Heaven and Earth. As ſhe was the ſecond prophetic power that held her oracular ſeat at Delphos, ſhe was honoured as the goddeſs of Truth and Juſtice.

And

And night upon the whitening ground breathe frore,
But ſoon to melt, touch'd by his orient ray.
So ſhall ſome preſent ill with varied pain
Afflict thee; nor is he yet born, whoſe hand
Shall ſet thee free: thus thy humanity
Receives its meed, that thou, a god, regardleſs
Of the gods' anger, honouredſt mortal man
With courteſies, which juſtice not approves.
Therefore the joyleſs ſtation of this rock
Unſleeping, unreclining, ſhalt thou keep,
And many' a groan, many' a loud lament
Throw out in vain, nor move the rig'rous breaſt
Of Jove, relentleſs in his youthful pow'r.

STRENGTH.

No more: why theſe delays, this fooliſh pity?
Doſt thou not hate a god by gods abhor'd,
That proſtitutes thy radiant boaſt to man?

VULCAN.

Strong are the ties of kindred and long converſe.

STRENGTH.

Well: but to diſobey thy ſire's commands,
Dareſt thou do that? Is not that fear more ſtrong?

VULCAN.

VULCAN.

Soft pity never touch'd thy ruthleſs mind.

STRENGTH.

Will thy vain pity bring relief? Forbear,
Nor waſte thyſelf in what avails not him.

VULCAN.

Abhor'd be all the fine ſkill of my hands.

STRENGTH.

And why abhor'd? For of theſe preſent toils
Thy art, in very truth, is not the cauſe.

VULCAN.

Yet wiſh I it had been ſome other's lot.

STRENGTH.

All have their lot appointed, ſave to reign
In heav'n, for liberty is Jove's alone.

VULCAN.

Truth guides thy words, nor have I to gainſay.

STRENGTH.

Why thus reluctant then to bind his chains?
Let not thy ſire obſerve theſe ſlow delays.

VULCAN.

VULCAN.

The manacles are ready, thou mayſt ſee them.

STRENGTH.

Bind them around his hands; with all thy force
Strike, nail them faſt, drive them into the rock.

VULCAN.

Thus far the work is finiſh'd, and not ſlightly.

STRENGTH.

Strike harder, ſtrain them, let them not relax;
His craft will work unthought of ways t'eſcape.

VULCAN.

This arm too is inextricably fix'd.

STRENGTH.

And now claſp this ſecure, that he may learn
How impotent his craft, oppos'd to Jove.

VULCAN.

This work he only can with juſtice blame.

STRENGTH.

Acroſs his breaſt draw now this ſtubborn bar
Of adamant, fix firm its ſharpen'd point.

VULCAN.

VULCAN.

Thy miſeries, Prometheus, I bewail.

STRENGTH.

Still doſt thou linger? Still bewail the foes
Of Jove? Take heed leſt thou bewail thyſelf.

VULCAN.

Thou ſeeſt an object horrible to ſight.

STRENGTH.

I ſee him honour'd as his deeds deſerve.
But haſte thee, fix this ſtrong habergeon on him.

VULCAN.

Conſtraint lies on me; urge not thou its rigor.

STRENGTH.

Urge thee? I will, and in an higher tone.
Downwards; with all thy force enring his legs.

VULCAN.

This too is finiſh'd, with no ling'ring ſpeed.

STRENGTH.

Strike hard, drive deep their penetrating points.
Severe his eye, who nicely ſcans theſe works.

VULCAN.

VULCAN.

Thy voice is harſh, and rugged as thy form.

STRENGTH.

Now fair befall thy ſoftneſs; yet upbraid not
My ruder and unpitying ruthleſſneſs.

VULCAN.

Let us be gone: the rig'rous taſk is done.

STRENGTH.

Now triumph in thy inſolence; now ſteal
The glory of the gods, and bear the gift
To mortal man: will they relieve thee now?
Falſe is the boaſted prudence of thy name,
Or wanted now to free thee from thy fate.

PROMETHEUS, ALONE[c].

Ætherial air, and ye ſwift-winged winds,

Ye

[c] No writer knew better how to preſerve propriety of character than Æſchylus. Prometheus diſdained to anſwer the ferocious inſolence of theſe miniſters of Jupiter, nor could even the tender commiſeration of Vulcan elicit a word from him. There is a dignity, and even a ſublimity in this ſilence beyond the expreſſion of words. But as ſoon as the inſtruments of tyranny left him, he burſts into a ſtrain of pathetic lamentation, and invokes all nature to atteſt his undeſerved ſufferings.

Ye rivers ſpringing from freſh founts, ye waves[d],
That o'er th' interminable ocean wreath
Your criſped ſmiles, thou all-producing earth,
And thee, bright ſun, I call, whoſe flaming orb
Views the wide world beneath, ſee what, a god,
I ſuffer from the gods; with what fierce pains,
Behold, what tortures for revolving ages
I here muſt ſtruggle; ſuch unſeemly chains
This new-rais'd ruler of the gods devis'd.
Ah me! That groan burſts from my anguiſh'd heart,
My preſent woes and future to bemoan.
When ſhall theſe ſuff'rings find their deſtin'd end?
But why that vain inquiry? My clear ſight
Looks through the future; unforeſeen no ill

ſufferings. There is a further propriety in this addreſs; the Winds were the ſons of Nereus and Doris, the Rivers of Oceanus and Tethys, the Sun of Hyperion and Thea, whoſe parents were Ouranus and Gaia: theſe were all kindred gods, benevolent to Prometheus, and deeply affected with his miſeries.

[d] Refertur ad levem ſonum undarum ventis exagitatarum, qui etiam aliquantulum criſpant maris dorſum quaſi amabili quâdam γελασίᾳ.—STANLEY. The image is here ſo beautifully poetical, that the tranſlator could not give it up for the cool correction of Pauw.

Shall

Shall come on me: behoves me then to bear
Patient my deſtin'd fate, knowing how vain
To ſtruggle with neceſſity's ſtrong pow'r.
But to complain, or not complain, alike
Is unavailable. For favours ſhown
To mortal man I bear this weight of woe;
Hid in an hollow cane the fount of fire
I privately convey'd, of ev'ry art
Productive, and the nobleſt gift to men.
And for this ſlight offence, woe, woe is me!
I bear theſe chains, fix'd to this ſavage rock,
Unſhelter'd from th' inclemencies of th' air.
Ah me! what ſound, what ſoftly-breathing odour!

* This ſoftly-breathing odour marks the approach of ſome divinity. When Juno, in the 14th Iliad, retires to her apartment to dreſs with more than ordinary care,

Here firſt ſhe bathes, and round her body pours,
Soft oil of fragrance, and ambroſial ſhow'rs:
The winds perfum'd the balmy gale convey
Thro' heav'n, thro' earth, and all th' aerial way;
Spirit divine! whoſe exhalation greets
The ſenſe of gods with more than mortal ſweets. POPE.

Thus Venus in the firſt Æneid diſcovers herſelf to Æneas,

Ambroſiæque comæ divinum vertice odorem
Spiravere.

Her waving locks immortal odours ſhed,
And breath'd ambroſial ſcents around her head. PITT.

Steals

Steals on my ſenſe? Be you immortal gods,
Or mortal men, or of th' heroic race,
Whoe'er have reach'd this wild rock's extreme cliff,
Spectators of my woes, or what your purpoſe,
Ye ſee me bound, a wretched god, abhor'd
By Jove, and ev'ry god that treads his courts,
For my fond love to man. Ah me! again
I hear the ſound of flutt'ring nigh; the air
Pants to the ſoft beat of light-moving wings:
All, that approaches now, is dreadful to me.

PROMETHEUS, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Forbear thy fears: a friendly train[f]
On buſy pennons flutt'ring light,
We come, our ſire not aſk'd in vain,
And reach this promontory's height.

[f] Æſchylus with great judgment introduces theſe daughters of Oceanus as attending Prometheus; by their conſanguinity they muſt be a friendly train. In the ſimplicity of antient manners their father's conſent muſt firſt be obtained; and even thus virgin modeſty is ſomething hurt. The Nymphs of the waters wore no ſandals; hence Thetis is called the ſilver-footed, as Juno is the golden-ſlippered queen.

The clanging iron's horrid ſound
Re-echo'd thro' our caves profound;
And tho' my cheek glows with ſhame's crimſon dye,
Thus with unſandal'd foot with winged ſpeed I fly.

PROMETHEUS.

Ah me! Ah me!
Ye virgin ſiſters, who derive your race
From fruitful Thetis, and th' embrace
Of old Oceanus, your ſire, that rolls
Around the wide world his unquiet waves,
This way turn your eyes, behold
With what a chain fix'd to this rugged ſteep
Th' unenvied ſtation of the rock I keep.

CHORUS.

I ſee, I ſee; and o'er my eyes,
Surcharg'd with ſorrow's tearful rain,
Dark'ning the miſty clouds ariſe;
I ſee thy adamantine chain;
In its ſtrong graſp thy limbs confin'd,
And withering in the parching wind:
Such the ſtern pow'r of heav'n's new-ſceptred lord,
And law-controlling Jove's irrevocable word.

PROMETHEUS.

Beneath the earth,
Beneath the gulfs of Tartarus[g], that ſpread
Interminable o'er the dead,
Had his ſtern fury fix'd this rigid chain,
Nor gods, nor men had triumph'd in my pain.
But pendent in th' ætherial air,
The pageant gratifies my ruthleſs foes,
That gaze, inſult, and glory in my woes.

CHORUS.

Is there a god, whoſe ſullen ſoul
Feels a ſtern joy in thy deſpair?
Owns he not pity's ſoft controul,
And drops in ſympathy the tear?
All, all, ſave Jove; with fury driv'n
Severe he tames the ſons of heav'n;
And he will tame them, till ſome pow'r ariſe
To wreſt from his ſtrong hand the ſceptre of the ſkies.

[g] Japetus had three ſons, Menœtius, Prometheus, and Epimetheus. Menœtius, for his inſolence and audacious attempts, was by Jupiter ſmitten with thunder, and caſt into Tartarus, where the vanquiſhed Titans were impriſoned. HESIOD.—To this Prometheus here alludes.

PROMETHEUS.

Yet he, e'en he,
That o'er the gods holds his deſpotic reign,
And fixes this diſgraceful chain,
Shall need my aid, the counſels to diſcloſe
Deſtructive to his honour and his throne.
But not the honied blandiſhment, that flows
From his alluring lips, ſhall ought avail;
His rigid menaces ſhall fail;
Nor will I make the fatal ſecret known,
Till his proud hands this galling chain unbind,
And his remorſe ſooths my indignant mind.

CHORUS.

Bold and intrepid is thy ſoul,
Fir'd with reſentment's warmeſt glow;
And thy free voice diſdains controul,
Diſdains the tort'ring curb of woe.
My ſofter boſom, thrill'd with fear
Leſt heavier ills await thee here,
By milder counſels wiſhes thee repoſe:
For Jove's relentleſs rage no tender pity knows.

PROMETHEUS.

Stern tho' he be,
And, in the pride of pow'r terrific dreſt,
Rears o'er inſulted right his creſt,
Yet gentler thoughts ſhall mitigate his ſoul,
When o'er his head this ſtorm ſhall roll;
Then ſhall his ſtubborn indignation bend,
Submit to ſue, and court me for a friend.

CHORUS.

But ſay, relate at large for what offence
Committed doth the wrath of Jove inflict
This puniſhment ſo ſhameful, ſo ſevere:
Inſtruct us, if the tale ſhocks not thy ſoul.

PROMETHEUS.

'Tis painful to relate it, to be ſilent
Is pain: each circumſtance is full of woe [h].

When

[h] Gaia, offended with her huſband Ouranus for having impriſoned the braveſt of her ſons, encouraged Saturn to revenge the affront, and armed him with a ſcythe of adamant, with which he diſmembered his father, then ſeized his throne. But having heard a prophecy that he in his turn ſhould be dethroned by one of his ſons, to evade the completion of it, he ſwallowed down all his male offspring as ſoon as they were born, till at the birth of Jupiter, Rhea deceived him by a

When ſtern debate amongſt the gods appear'd,
And diſcord in the courts of heav'n was rous'd;
Whilſt againſt Saturn ſome conſpiring will'd
To pluck him from the throne, that Jove might reign;
And ſome, averſe, with ardent zeal oppos'd
Jove's riſing pow'r and empire o'er the gods;
My counſels, tho' diſcreeteſt, wiſeſt, beſt,
Mov'd not the Titans, thoſe impetuous ſons
Of Ouranus and Terra, whoſe high ſpirits,
Diſdaining milder meaſures, proudly ween'd
To ſeize by force the ſceptre of the ſky.
Oft did my goddeſs mother, Themis now,

ſtrange device, and privately conveyed the child to Crete, where he was educated, and concealed till he was of age to appear in arms againſt his father. As Saturn, was the youngeſt ſon of Ouranus, the two eldeſt, Titanus and Japetus, claimed their hereditary honours, and oppoſed the ſovereignty of Jupiter. The war had now continued ten years without intermiſſion, and no proſpect of a deciſion appeared, when Jupiter releaſed Briareus, Cottus, and Gyges, the ſons whom Saturn had impriſoned, and by feaſting them with nectar and ambroſia, ſecured their fidelity: theſe were of immenſe courage, ſtrength, and ſize, each had fifty heads and an hundred hands; by their aſſiſtance the Titans were totally defeated, and Jupiter acknowledged as the ſovereign of the ſky. Heſiod deſcribes this battle with wonderful ſublimity.

Now

Now Gaia, under various names deſign'd[1],
Herſelf the ſame, foretell me the event,
That not by violence, that not by pow'r,
But gentler arts, the royalty of heav'n
Muſt be obtain'd. Whilſt thus my voice adviſ'd,
Their headlong rage deign'd me not e'en a look.
What then could wiſdom dictate, but to take
My mother, and with voluntary aid
Abet the cauſe of Jove? Thus by my counſels
In the dark deep Tartarean gulph enclos'd
Old Saturn lies, and his confederate pow'rs.
For theſe good deeds the tyrant of the ſkies
Repays me with theſe dreadful puniſhments.
For foul miſtruſt of thoſe that ſerve them beſt
Breathes its black poiſon in each tyrant's heart.
Aſk you the cauſe for which he tortures me?

[1] A multiplicity of names was a mark of dignity; but Themis could not with propriety be called Gaia, this our poet miſtook for Rhea. Gaia is the earth in its primitive uncultivated ſtate, terra inculta; Rhea is the earth in its improved ſtate of cultivation, tellus culta: and as from this culture property aroſe, Juſtice had here her office, to aſſign and protect this property, ſuum cuique: Themis therefore, as the goddeſs of Juſtice, might well have the appellation of Rhea. This is only to ſhow that we underſtand the mythology of the ancients much better than they did themſelves.

I will declare it. On his father's throne
Scarce was he ſeated, on the chiefs of heav'n
He ſhow'r'd his various honours; thus confirming
His royalty; but for unhappy mortals [k]
Had no regard, and all the preſent race
Will'd to extirpate, and to form a new.
None, ſave myſelf, oppos'd his will; I dar'd;
And boldly pleading ſav'd them from deſtruction,
Sav'd them from ſinking to the realms of night.
For this offence I bend beneath theſe pains,
Dreadful to ſuffer, piteous to behold:
For mercy to mankind I am not deem'd
Worthy of mercy; but with ruthleſs hate
In this uncouth appointment am fix'd here
A ſpectacle diſhonorable to Jove.

CHORUS.

Of iron is he form'd and adamant,
Whoſe breaſt with ſocial ſorrow does not melt

[k] We are not informed for what cauſe Jupiter was ſo offended with the unhappy race of mortals; but by way of puniſhment he withdrew from them παντέχνε πυρὸς σέλας, the firey flame, that lends its aid to every art: this Prometheus ſtole from heaven, and reconveyed to them in an hollow cane: hinc illæ lacrymæ.

At thy afflictions: I nor wiſh'd to ſee them,
Nor ſee them but with anguiſh at my heart.

PROMETHEUS.

It is a ſight that ſtrikes my friends with pity.

CHORUS.

But had th' offence no further aggravation?

PROMETHEUS.

I hid from men the foreſight of their fate.

CHORUS.

What cou'dſt thou find to remedy that ill?

PROMETHEUS.

I ſent blind Hope t'inhabit in their hearts.

CHORUS.

A bleſſing haſt thou given to mortal man.

PROMETHEUS.

Nay more, with generous zeal I gave them Fire.

CHORUS.

Do mortals now enjoy the blazing gift?

PROMETHEUS.

And by it ſhall give birth to various arts.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

For ſuch offences doth the wrath of Jove
Thus puniſh thee, relaxing nought of pain?
And is no bound preſcrib'd to thy affliction?

PROMETHEUS.

None elſe, but when his own will ſhall incline him.

CHORUS.

Who ſhall incline his will? Haſt thou no hope?
Doſt thou not ſee that thou haſt much offended?
But to point out th' offence to me were painful,
And might ſound harſh to thee: forbear we then;
Bethink thee how thy ills may find an end.

PROMETHEUS.

How eaſy, when the foot is not entangled
In miſery's thorny maze, to give monitions
And precepts to th' afflicted! Of theſe things
I was not unadvis'd; and my offence
Was voluntary; in man's cauſe I drew
Theſe evils on my head: but ills like theſe,
On this aerial rock to waſte away,
This deſart and unſocial precipice,

My

My mind preſag'd it not. But ceaſe your grief,
Wail not my preſent woes; on the rough point
Of this firm cliff deſcend, and there obſerve
What further may betide me, e'en the whole
Of my hard fate; indulge me, O indulge
This my requeſt, and ſympathize with me
Thus wretched; for affliction knows no reſt,
But rolls from breaſt to breaſt its vagrant tide.

CHORUS.

Not to th' unwilling are thy words directed.
With light foot now this nimble-moving ſeat,
This pure air, thro' whoſe liquid fields the birds
Winnow their wanton way, I leave; and now
Alight I on this rude and craggy rock,
Anxious to hear all thy unhappy tale.

OCEANUS, PROMETHEUS, CHORUS.

OCEANUS.

Far diſtant, thro' the vaſt expanſe of air,
To thee, Prometheus, on this ſwift-wing'd ſteed[1],

[1] Il paroît monté ſur je ne ſcai quel animal aîlé; bizarrerie inexplicable.—Brumoy.—Of this breed was the winged horſe of Aſtolfo.—4th book, 13th c. Orlando Furioſo.

Whoſe

Whoſe neck unrein'd obeys my will, I come,
In ſocial ſorrow ſympathizing with thee.
To this the near affinity of blood
Moves me; and be aſſur'd, that tie apart,
There is not who can tax my dear regard
Deeper than thou: believe me, this is truth,
Not the falſe glozings of a flatt'ring tongue.
Inſtruct me then in what my pow'r may ſerve thee,
For never ſhalt thou ſay thou haſt a friend
More firm, more conſtant than Oceanus.

PROMETHEUS.

Ah me! What draws thee hither? Art thou come
Spectator of my toils? How haſt thou ventur'd
To leave the ocean waves, from thee ſo call'd,
Thy rock-roof'd grottos arch'd by nature's hand,
And land upon this iron-teeming earth?
Comeſt thou to viſit and bewail my ills?
Behold this ſight, behold this friend of Jove,
Th' aſſertor of his empire, bending here
Beneath a weight of woes by him inflicted.

OCEANUS.

I ſee it all, and wiſh to counſel thee,
Wiſe as thou art, to milder meaſures: learn

To

To know thyſelf; new model thy behaviour,
As the new monarch of the gods requires.
What if thy harſh and pointed ſpeech ſhou'd reach
The ear of Jove, tho' on his diſtant throne
High-ſeated, might they not inflame his rage
T' inflict ſuch tortures, that thy preſent pains
Might ſeem a recreation and a ſport?
Ceaſe then, unhappy ſufferer, ceaſe thy braves,
And meditate the means of thy deliverance.
To thee perchance this ſeems the cold advice
Of doting age; yet, truſt me, woes like theſe
Are earnings of the lofty-ſounding tongue.
But thy unbending ſpirit diſdains to yield
E'en to afflictions, to the preſent rather
Ambitious to add more. Yet ſhalt thou not,
If my voice may be heard, lift up thy heel
To kick againſt the pricks; ſo rough, thou ſeeſt,
So uncontroul'd the monarch of the ſkies.
But now I go, and will exert my pow'r,
If haply I may free thee from thy pains.
Mean while be calm; forbear this haughty tone:
Has not thy copious wiſdom taught thee this,
That miſchief ſtill attends the petulant tongue?

PROMETHEUS.

I gratulate thy fortune, that on thee
No blame hath lighted, tho' aſſociate with me
In all, and daring equally. But now
Forbear, of my condition take no care;
Thou wilt not move him; nothing moves his rigor:
Take heed then, leſt to go brings harm on thee.

OCEANUS.

Wiſer for others than thyſelf I find
Thy thoughts; yet ſhalt thou not withhold my ſpeed.
And I have hopes, with pride I ſpeak it, hopes
T' obtain this grace, and free thee from thy ſufferings.

PROMETHEUS.

For this thou haſt my thanks; thy courteſy
With grateful memory ever ſhall be honour'd.
But think not of it, the attempt were vain,
Nor wou'd thy labour profit me; ceaſe then,
And leave me to my fate: however wretched,
I wiſh not to impart my woes to others.

OCEANUS.

OCEANUS.

No; for thy brother's fate, th' unhappy Atlas [m],
Afflicts me: on the weſtern ſhore he ſtands,
Supporting on his ſhoulders the vaſt pillar
Of Heav'n and Earth, a weight of cumbrous graſp.
Him too, the dweller of Cilicia's caves,
I ſaw, with pity ſaw, Earth's monſtrous ſon,
With all his hundred heads [n] ſubdued by Force,
The furious Typhon, who 'gainſt all the gods

[m] We have before ſeen one brother of Prometheus driven thunder-ſtruck to Tartarus; we have here another of that unhappy family, the famous Atlas, condemned to ſupport in his arms the pillars of the heavens.

[n] After the defeat of the Titans, Gaia, from an adventure with Tartarus, brought forth this her youngeſt ſon, the moſt enormous and moſt terrible of all the giant race: he had an hundred dragon-heads; his eyes glared fire; from all his heads he uttered every horrid ſound, ſometimes intelligible to the gods, ſometimes the lowing of a bull, ſometimes the roaring of a lion, ſometimes the howl of dogs, ſometimes the hiſs of ſerpents: his force was ſo formidable, as alone to endanger the ſovereignty of the ſky, and to compel Jupiter to exert his whole ſtrength and all his vollied thunder, of which Heſiod has given us a noble deſcription. Happily for poetry, this monſter, inſtead of being driven down to Tartarus, was defeated in the plains of Sicily, where the mountain Ætna was hurled upon him. The genius of Heſiod ſeems to have taken fire from hence, and communicated the flame to Æſchylus, Pindar, and Virgil.

Made

Made war; his horrid jaws with ſerpent-hiſs
Breath'd ſlaughter, from his eyes the gorgon-glare
Of baleful lightnings flaſh'd, as his proud force
Wou'd rend from Jove his empire of the ſky.
But him the vengeful bolt, inſtinct with fire,
Smote ſore, and daſh'd him from his haughty vaunts,
Pierc'd thro' his ſoul, and wither'd all his ſtrength.
Thus ſtretch'd out huge in length beneath the roots
Of Ætna, near Trinacria's narrow ſea,
Aſtonied, blaſted, ſpiritleſs he lies;
On whoſe high ſummit Vulcan holds his ſeat,
And forms the glowing maſs. In times to come
Hence ſtreams of torrent fire with hideous roar
Shall burſt, and with its waſteful mouths devour
All the fair fields of fruitful Sicily.
Such rage ſhall Typhon, blaſted as he is
With Jove's fierce lightning, pour inceſſant forth
In ſmoking whirlwinds and tempeſtuous flame.

PROMETHEUS.

Thou art not unexperienc'd, nor haſt need
Of my inſtruction; ſave thyſelf, how beſt
Thy wiſdom ſhall direct thee. I will bear
My preſent fate, till Jove's harſh wrath relents.

OCEANUS.

OCEANUS.

Know'ſt thou not this, Prometheus, that ſoft ſpeech
Is to diſtemper'd wrath medicinal?

PROMETHEUS.

When ſeaſonably the healing balm's applied;
Elſe it exaſperates the ſwelling heart.

OCEANUS.

But in the fair endeavour, in th' attempt,
What diſadvantage, tell me, doſt thou ſee?

PROMETHEUS.

Unfruitful labour, and light-thoughted folly.

OCEANUS.

Be that my weakneſs then. Oft' when the wiſe
Appears not wiſe, he works the greateſt good.

PROMETHEUS.

This will be deem'd my ſimple policy.

OCEANUS.

Theſe words indeed remand me to my grotto.

PROMETHEUS.

Ceaſe to bewail me, leſt thou wake his wrath.

OCEANUS.

What, the new monarch's of heav'n's potent throne?

PROMETHEUS.

Take care his indignation be not rous'd.

OCEANUS.

Thy miſery ſhall be my monitor.

PROMETHEUS.

Go then, be cautious, hold thy preſent judgment.

OCEANUS.

Thy words add ſpeed to my diſpatch. Already
My plumed ſteed his levell'd wings diſplays
To fan the liquid air, thro' fond deſire
In his own lodge his wearied ſpeed to reſt.

PROMETHEUS, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

For thee I heave the heart-felt ſigh,
My boſom melting at thy woes;
For thee my tear-diſtilling eye
In ſtreams of tender ſorrow flows:

For

For Jove's imperious ruthleſs ſoul,
That ſcorns the pow'r of mild controul,
Chaſtens with horrid tort'ring pain
Not known to gods, before his iron reign.

E'en yet this ample region o'er
Hoarſe ſtrains of ſullen woe reſound[o],
Thy ſtate, thy brother's ſtate deplore,
Age-honour'd glories ruin'd round.
Thy woes, beneath the ſacred ſhade[p]
Of Aſia's paſtur'd foreſts laid,
The chaſte inhabitant bewails
Thy groans re-echoing thro' his plaintive vales.

The Colchian virgin, whoſe bold hand
Undaunted graſps the warlike ſpear;
On earth's laſt verge the Scythian band,
The torpid lake Mæotis near;

[o] The chorus here alludes to the puniſhment of Menœtius and Atlas mentioned before.

[p] This ſtanza and the next relate to Prometheus, the laſt to Atlas. All Aſia lamented the ſufferings of the former; the earth, the ſea, and the gloomy depths of Pluto ſympathize with Atlas, for whilſt he bore the heavens on his ſhoulders, all below muſt be violently preſſed beneath his feet.—Pauw.

Arabia's martial race, that wield
The ſharp lance in th' embattled field,
Thro' all their rock-built cities moan;
The crags of Caucaſus return the groan.

One other, e'er thy galling chain,
Of heaven's high ſons with tortures quell'd,
That rack each joint, each ſinew ſtrain,
Titanian Atlas I beheld;
His giant ſtrength condemn'd to bear
The ſolid, vaſt, and pond'rous ſphere.
The ſprings whoſe freſh ſtreams ſwell around,
The hoarſe waves from their depths profound,
And all the gloomy realms below.
Sigh to his ſighs, and murmur to his woe.

PROMETHEUS.

It is not pride; deem nobler of me, virgins;
It is not pride, that held me ſilent thus;
The thought of theſe harſh chains, that hang me here,
Cuts to my heart. Yet who, like me, advanc'd
To their high dignity our new-rais'd gods?
But let me ſpare the tale, to you well known.

The

The ills of man you've heard: I form'd his mind,
And through the cloud of barb'rous ignorance
Diffus'd the beams of knowledge. I will ſpeak,
Not taxing them with blame, but my own gifts
Diſplaying, and benevolence to them.
They ſaw indeed, they heard; but what avail'd
Or ſight, or ſenſe of hearing, all things rolling
Like the unreal imagery of dreams,
In wild confuſion mix'd? The lightſome wall
Of finer maſonry, the rafter'd roof
They knew not; but, like ants ſtill buried, delv'd [q]
Deep in the earth, and ſcoop'd their ſunleſs caves.
Unmark'd the ſeaſons chang'd, the biting winter,
The flow'r perfumed ſpring, the ripening ſummer
Fertile of fruits. At random all their works,
Till I inſtructed them to mark the ſtars,

[q] The tranſlator has followed the emendation of Pauw; for though ἀϊσυφοι be a proper and general epithet for the provident ants, who are therefore by Ovid ſtiled frugilegæ, and it is to the purpoſe of Horace, when he ſays of this little animal, Ore trahit quodcunque poteſt, yet in this place it has no pertinent analogy to untutored barbarians dwelling in caves: it was not then the induſtrious forecaſt of the ant to which Æſchylus had occaſion to allude, but its neſt ſcooped in the ground: ἀϊσορος conveys the preciſe idea.

Their riſing, and, an harder ſcience yet[r],
Their ſetting. The rich train of marſhall'd numbers
I taught them, and the meet array of letters.
T' impreſs

[r] Of the many advantages for which the tranſlator is indebted to Æſchylus, the greateſt and moſt valuable is the honour which he receives from the acquaintance of ſome perſons of the higheſt rank, and the moſt diſtinguiſhed eminence in literature; among theſe he is proud to reckon

RICHARD PAUL JODRELL, ESQ.

This gentleman has been ſo kind as to communicate his own obſervations on one tragedy, the Siege of Thebes, with leave to the compiler of theſe notes to ſelect from them ſuch as might be found to coincide with his plan; a liberal uſe has been made of theſe, enough to make the reader regret that the preſſing call for this publication would not admit of a delay, till the ſame learned perſon's obſervations on the other tragedies could be reviſed; but ex pede Herculem.

The tranſlator had religiouſly adhered to his original in the δυσκρίτου; δύσεις, v. 457. but was totally at a loſs to account for the ſuperior difficulty of marking the ſetting of the ſtars. He took the liberty to communicate his embarraſſment to Mr. Jodrell, and was immediately favoured with this clear and judicious ſolution of the paſſage.

"It is difficult to aſcertain the degree of knowledge, which the philoſophers contemporary with Æſchylus had of the fixed ſtars; for Hipparchus the Rhodian, who flouriſhed only 120 years before Chriſt, which was near 420 years after the birth of Æſchylus, was the firſt who dared to undertake a thing, which, ſays Pliny, ſeemed to ſurpaſs the power of a divinity, that of numbering

T' impreſs theſe precepts on their hearts I ſent
Memory, the active mother of all wiſdom.
I taught the patient ſteer to bear the yoke,
In all his toils joint-labourer with man.

By

numbering the ſtars for poſterity, and reducing them to a rule. Becauſe the civil year of the ancients did not correſpond with the apparent annual motion of the ſun, it was impoſſible by the calendar to aſcertain the preciſe times for the purpoſes of agriculture, as the ſame day of the month would not happen in the ſame ſeaſon of the year; it was neceſſary therefore to have recourſe to more certain ſtandards and invariable characters to diſtinguiſh times, which the riſings and the ſettings of the ſtars naturally afforded: Prometheus, therefore, with great propriety might boaſt of this ſignal and important diſcovery to mankind: of which Virgil, in his firſt Georgic, when he delivers his poetical precepts for the huſbandman, makes a particular injunction,

Præterea tam ſunt Arcturi ſidera nobis,
Hædorumque dies ſervandi, et lucidus anguis, &c.

Heſiod had before given precepts of a ſimilar nature.

"Now the riſing of a ſtar, as defined by Chryſippus, is its advancement above the earth, and its ſetting the occultation of it under the earth (See Stanley's Hiſtory of Philoſophy, part viii. c. 8.). And aſtronomers have divided the riſings and ſettings of ſtars, according to their technical expreſſions, into Coſmical, Achronical, and Heliacal, which are thus explained by Keil in his 19th lecture, p. 222. "A ſtar is ſaid to riſe or ſet coſmically, which riſes or ſets when the ſun riſes; achronically, when it riſes while the ſun ſets, that is in the evening, when it is in oppoſition to the ſun, and is viſible all night;

By me the harneſs'd ſteed was train'd to whirl
The rapid car, and grace the pride of wealth.
The tall bark, lightly bounding o'er the waves,
I taught its courſe, and wing'd its flying ſail.
To man I gave theſe arts; with all my wiſdom
Yet want I now one art, that uſeful art
To free myſelf from theſe afflicting chains.

CHORUS.

Unſeemly are thy ſufferings, ſprung from error
And impotence of mind. And now inclos'd
With all theſe ills, as ſome unſkilful leach
That ſinks beneath his malady, thy ſoul
Deſponds, nor ſeeks medicinal relief.

night; heliacally, when after it has been in conjunction with the ſun, and on that account inviſible, it comes to be at ſuch a diſtance from him as to be ſeen in the morning before ſun riſing, when the ſun, by his apparent motion, recedes from the ſtar towards the eaſt: but the Heliacal ſetting is, when the ſun approaches ſo near a ſtar, that it hides it with its beams, which keep the fainter light of the ſtar from being perceived." This I conceive to be the meaning of the poet in his epithet of δυσκρίτους, or

——an harder ſcience yet,
Their ſetting.——

For by this philoſophical ſolution the obſervation of the ſettings of the ſtars muſt be attended with more difficulty than that of the riſings: this appears to me to be the moſt natural explication of this paſſage."

PROME-

PROMETHEUS.

Hear my whole ſtory, thou wilt wonder more,
What uſeful arts, what ſcience I invented.
This firſt and greateſt: when the fell diſeaſe
Prey'd on the human frame, relief was none,
Nor healing drug, nor cool refreſhing draught,
Nor pain-aſſuaging unguent; but they pin'd
Without redreſs, and waſted, till I taught them
To mix the balmy medicine, of pow'r
To chaſe each pale diſeaſe, and ſoften pain.
I taught the various modes of prophecy,
What truth the dream portends, the omen what
Of nice diſtinction, what the caſual ſight
That meets us on the way; the flight of birds,
When to the right, when to the left they take
Their airy courſe, their various ways of life,
Their feuds, their fondneſſes, their ſocial flocks.
I taught th' Haruſpex to inſpect the entrails,
Their ſmoothneſs, and their colour to the gods
Grateful, the gall, the liver ſtreak'd with veins,
The limbs involv'd in fat, and the long chine
Plac'd on the blazing altar; from the ſmoke
And mounting flame to mark th' unerring omen.

Theſe

Theſe arts I taught. And all the ſecret treaſures
Deep buried in the bowels of the earth,
Braſs, iron, ſilver, gold, their uſe to man,
Let the vain tongue make what high vaunts it may,
Are my inventions all; and, in a word,
Prometheus taught each uſeful art to man.

CHORUS.

Let not thy love to man o'erleap the bounds
Of reaſon, nor neglect thy wretched ſtate:
So my fond hope ſuggeſts thou ſhalt be free
From theſe baſe chains, nor leſs in pow'r than Jove.

PROMETHEUS.

Not thus, it is not in the Fates that thus
Theſe things ſhould end: cruſh'd with a thouſand wrongs,
A thouſand woes, I ſhall eſcape theſe chains.
Neceſſity is ſtronger far than art.

CHORUS.

Who then is ruler of neceſſity?

PROMETHEUS.

The triple Fates and unforgetting furies.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Muſt Jove then yield to their ſuperior pow'r?

PROMETHEUS.

He no way ſhall eſcape his deſtin'd fate.

CHORUS.

What, but eternal empire, is his fate?

PROMETHEUS.

Thou may'ſt not know this now: forbear t' inquire.

CHORUS.

Is it of moment what thou keep'ſt thus cloſe?

PROMETHEUS.

No more of this diſcourſe; it is not time
Now to diſcloſe that which requires the ſeal
Of ſtricteſt ſecreſy; by guarding which
I ſhall eſcape the miſery of theſe chains.

CHORUS.

STROPHE.

Never, never may my ſoul
Jove's all-ruling pow'r defy;

Never

Never feel his harſh controul,
Sov'reign ruler of the ſky.
When the hallow'd ſteer has bled[s],
When the ſacred feaſt is ſpread,
'Midſt the cryſtal waves below,
Whence father Ocean's boundleſs billows flow,
Let not my foot be ſlow:
There, th' ætherial gueſts among,
No rude ſpeech diſgrace my tongue.
May my mind this rev'rence keep;
Print it ſtrong, and grave it deep.

ANTISTROPHE.

When thro' life's extended ſcene
Hope her ſtedfaſt luſtre throws,
Swells the ſoul with joy ſerene,
With ſublimeſt triumph glows.
Seeſt thou this pure luſtre ſhine?
Are theſe heart-felt raptures thine?

[s] The chorus here alludes to the ſolemn annual feſtival, which the gods held with their father Oceanus, and at which they ſhowed their piety and reverence by their attendance and miniſtry.—Pauw.——See Homer, 1 Il. v. 423. with Mr. Pope's note.

My

My cold blood curdles in my veins,
To ſee thy hideous woes, thy tort'ring pains,
And adamantine chains.
Thy free ſoul, untaught to fear,
Scorn'd the danger threat'ning near;
And for mortals dar'd defy
The ſovereign monarch of the ſky.

EPODE.

Vain thy ardor, vain thy grace,
They nor force nor aid repay;
Like a dream man's feeble race,
Short-liv'd reptiles of a day.
Shall their weak devices move
The' order'd harmony of Jove?
Touch'd with pity of thy pain,
All ſad and ſlow I pour the moral ſtrain;
Chang'd from that melting vein,
When the light mellifluous meaſure
Round thy bath, and round thy bed
For our ſea-nymph ſiſter ſpread,
Awoke young love and bridal pleaſure,
And pour'd the ſoul of harmony,
To greet the bright Heſione.

IO, PROMETHEUS, CHORUS.

IO.

Whither, ah whither am I borne [1]!
To what rude ſhore, what barb'rous race? O thou,
Whoe'er thou art, that chain'd to that bleak rock,
The ſeat of deſolation, rueſt thy crimes,
Say on what ſhore my wretched footſteps ſtray.—
Again that ſting!—Ah me, that form again!—
With all his hundred eyes the earth-born Argus—
Cover it, Earth! See, how it glares upon me,
The horrid ſpectre!—Wilt thou not, O Earth,
Cover the dead, that from thy dark abyſs
He comes to haunt me, to purſue my ſteps,
And drive me foodleſs o'er the barren ſtrand?

[1] The poet here introduces to us the moſt ſingular and illuſtrious perſonage of ancient Greece, from whom the nobleſt families were proud of deriving their pedigree; the bare mention of her was a compliment to their vanity, and therefore always well accepted; it had a peculiar propriety here, as it prepared the Athenian ſpectator to receive her great deſcendant Hercules, who was to appear in the next play, which unhappily is loſt. In the Supplicants we ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more particularly of her.

Hoarſe

Hoarſe ſounds the reed-compacted pipe [a], a note
Sullen and drowſy.—Miſerable me!
Whither will theſe wide-wand'ring errors lead me?
How, ſon of Saturn, how have I offended,
That with theſe ſtings, theſe tortures thou purſueſt me,
And driveſt to madneſs my affrighted ſoul!
Hear me, ſupreme of gods, O hear thy ſuppliant,
Blaſt mè with lightnings, bury me in the' earth,
Or caſt me to the monſters of the ſea;
But ſpare theſe toils, ſpare theſe wide-wand'ring errors,
Which drive me round the world, and know no reſt.

CHORUS.

Hear'ſt thou the voice of this lamenting virgin?
For ſuch ſhe is, tho' in that form diſguis'd.

[a] So Ovid ſeems to have underſtood this paſſage,

junctiſque canendo
Vincere arundinibus ſervantia lumina tentat.

And ſtill betwixt, his tuneful pipe he plies,
And watch'd his hour to cloſe the keeper's eyes.

DRYDEN.

In her diſtraction ſhe thought ſhe ſaw the ſpectre of her keeper Argos, ſhe thought ſhe heard the ſound of the pipe with which Mercury lulled all his hundred eyes to ſleep.

PROMETHEUS.

I hear her griefs, that whirl her ſoul to madneſs,
Daughter of Inachus, whoſe love enflames
The heart of Jove; hence Juno's jealous rage
Drives the poor wanderer reſtleſs o'er the world.

IO.

Whence is it that I hear my father's name?
Speak to my miſery, tell me who thou art;
What wretch art thou, that to a wretch like me
Uttereſt theſe truths, naming the malady,
Which, heav'n-inflicted, ſtings my tortur'd ſoul
To frenzy? Hence with hurrying ſteps I rove
Foodleſs, purſued by never-ceaſing wrath.
Ah me! What child of miſery ever ſuffer'd
Miſery like mine? But tell me, clearly tell me
What woes await me yet, what eaſe, what cure?
Say, if thou know'ſt, ſpeak, tell a wand'ring virgin.

PROMETHEUS.

All, thou can'ſt wiſh to learn, I'll tell thee clearly,
Wrapt in no veil abſtruſe; but in clear terms[x],
As

[x] Prometheus had mentioned her father's name, and the cauſe of her ſufferings; from whence Iö, rightly conceiving him

As friend to friend. Thine eyes behold Prometheus,
Whoſe warm benevolence gave fire to men.

IO.

O thou, the common bleſſing of mankind,
Wretched Prometheus, wherefore are theſe ſufferings?

PROMETHEUS.

Scarce have I ceas'd lamenting my misfortunes.

IO.

And wilt thou not allow me that ſad office?

PROMETHEUS.

Aſk what thou wilt, thou ſhalt learn all from me.

IO.

Say then, who bound thee in that rifted rock?

PROMETHEUS.

The ruthleſs will of Jove, but Vulcan's hand.

him to be a prophet, had requeſted him to tell her *clearly* what woes yet awaited her, and how they might be remedied: he anſwers, I will tell thee *clearly*, without that ænigmatical obſcurity which had rendered oracles famous for

Dark-utter'd anſwers of ambiguous ſenſe.

IO.

In what offending art thou chaſten'd thus?

PROMETHEUS.

Suffice it thee ſo much has been declar'd.

IO.

Say then what time ſhall end my wretched wand'rings.

PROMETHEUS.

Better repoſe in ignorance, than know.

IO.

Whate'er my woes to come, hide them not from me.

PROMETHEUS.

That favour unreluctant cou'd I grant thee.

IO.

Why this delay then to declare the whole?

PROMETHEUS.

Ungrateful taſk to rend thy ſoul with anguiſh.

IO.

Regard not me more than is pleaſing to me.

PROMETHEUS.

Conjur'd thus ſtrongly I muſt ſpeak. Hear then.

CHORUS.

Not yet: this mournful pleaſure let me ſhare:
Let us firſt learn the ſtory of her woes;
Her lips will teach us each ſad circumſtance
Of miſery paſt; the future be thy taſk.

PROMETHEUS.

Vouchſafe t' indulge their wiſh; they merit it;
And are beſides the ſiſters of thy father[y].
Nor light the recompence, when they, who hear,
Melt at the melancholy tale, and drop,
In pity drop, the ſympathizing tear.

IO.

Ill wou'd excuſe become me, or denial;
Take then the plain unornamented tale
Ye wiſh to hear; tho' ſad the taſk injoin'd,

[y] Inachus, the father of Iö, was the ſon of Oceanus and Tethys.

And hard: for how relate the heav'n-ſent tempeſt
That burſt upon my head, my form thus chang'd,
And all the weight of woe that overwhelms me?
Still, when retir'd to reſt, air-bodied forms[z]
Viſit my ſlumbers nightly, ſoothing me
With gentle ſpeech, "Bleſt maid, why hoard for ever
Thy virgin treaſure, when the higheſt nuptials
Await thy choice; the flames of ſoft deſire
Have touch'd the heart of Jove; he burns with love:
Diſdain not, gentle virgin, ah diſdain not
The couch of Jove; to Lerna's deep receſs,
Where graze thy father's herds the meads along,
Go, gentle virgin, crown the god's deſires."

[z] Iö tells her tale with great propriety, and by preſerving the decorum of her own character, conſults the dignity of her illuſtrious deſcendants. The circumſtance of the viſion, and the influence of the god over her ſlumbers, is a fine ſtroke of nature, embelliſhed with a rich poetical imagination;

Theſe are the day-dreams of a maid in love.

Ovid, who had no prejudice of high-deſcended anceſtry to flatter, has taken the liberty to depart from this bienſeance; Pellicis argolicæ is a coarſe appellation, and his poem is ſo much the worſe for it.

The

The night returns, the viſionary forms
Return again, and haunt my troubled ſoul
Forbidding reſt, till to my father's ear
I dar'd diſcloſe the viſions of the night.
To Pytho, to Dodona's vocal grove
He ſent his ſeers, anxious to know what beſt
Was pleaſing to the gods. Return'd they bring
Dark-utter'd anſwers of ambiguous ſenſe.
At length one oracle diſtinct and plain
Pronounc'd its mandates, charging Inachus
To drive me from his houſe and from my country,
To rove at large o'er earth's extremeſt bounds:
Shou'd he refuſe, the vengeful bolt of Jove,
Wing'd with red flames wou'd all his race deſtroy.
Obedient to the Pythian god he drove me
Unwilling from his houſe, himſelf unwilling
Compell'd by Jove, and harſh neceſſity.
Strait was my ſenſe diſorder'd, my fair form
Chang'd, as you ſee, disfigur'd with theſe horns;
And tortur'd with the bryze's horrid ſting,
Wild with my pain with frantic ſpeed I hurried
To Cenchrea's vale with ſilver-winding ſtreams [a]
Irriguous,

[a] The tranſlator hath here adopted the very judicious reading of Pauw with regard to Cenchrea; but notwithſtanding

Irriguous, and the fount whence Lerna ſpreads
Its wide expanſe of waters; cloſe behind
In wrathful mood walk'd Argus, earth-born herdſman,
With all his eyes obſervant of my ſteps.
Him unawares a ſudden fate depriv'd
Of life; whilſt I, ſtung with that heav'n-ſent peſt,
Am driv'n with devious ſpeed from land to land.
Thou haſt my tale. If ought of woes to come
Thy præſcient mind divines, relate them freely;
Nor thro' falſe pity with fallacious words
Sooth my vain hopes, my ſoul abhors as baſe
The fabling tongue of glozing courteſy.

CHORUS.

No more, no more, forbear. Ah never, never
Conceiv'd I that a tale ſo ſtrange ſhou'd reach
My ears; that miſeries, woes, diſtreſſes, terrors,
Dreadful to ſight, intolerable to ſenſe,
Shou'd ſhock me thus: woe, woe, unhappy fate!
How my ſoul ſhudders at the fate of Iö!

his aliud melius et facilius tibi dabo, prefers the Αρης τε κρηνης of Canterus to his Λερνης or Λερνην αδρην τε.

PROMETHEUS.

Already doſt thou ſigh, already tremble?
Check theſe emotions till the whole is heard.

CHORUS.

Speak, ſhow us: to the ſick ſome gleam of comfort
Flows from the knowledge of their pains to come.

PROMETHEUS.

Your firſt requeſt with eaſe has been obtain'd;
For from her lips you wiſh'd to hear the tale
Of her afflictions. Hear the reſt; what woes
From Juno's rage await this ſuff'ring virgin.
And thou with deep attention mark my words,
Daughter of Inachus; and learn from them
The traces of thy way. Firſt then, from hence
Turn to the orient ſun, and paſs the height
Of theſe uncultur'd mountains; thence deſcend
To where the wandering Scythians, train'd to bear
The diſtant-wounding bow, on wheels aloft
Roll on their wattled cottages; to theſe
Approach not nigh, but turn thy devious ſteps

Along the rough verge of the murm'ring main,
And paſs the barb'rous country: on the left
The Chalybes inhabit, whoſe rude hands
Temper the glowing ſteel; beware of theſe,
A ſavage and inhoſpitable race [b].
Thence ſhalt thou reach the banks of that proud ſtream,
Which from its [c] roaring torrent takes its name;
But paſs it not, tempt not its dangerous depths
Unfordable, till now thy weary ſteps
Shall reach the diſtant bound of Caucaſus,
Monarch of mountains; from whoſe extreme height
The burſting flood rolls down his pow'r of waters.
Paſſing thoſe ſtar-aſpiring heights, deſcend
Where to the ſouth the Amazonian tents,
Hoſtile to men, ſtretch o'er the plain; whoſe troops
In after times ſhall near Thermodon's banks
Fix in Themiſcyra's tow'rs their martial rule,

[b] The horrid cuſtom of ſacrificing ſtrangers, whoſe ill fortune drove them on their coaſts, marks the ſavage and inhoſpitable manners of theſe barbarians.

[c] Araxis.

Where

Where Salmydeſia points her cruel rocks,
And glories in her wrecks: this female train
With courteous zeal ſhall guide thee in thy way.
Arriving where the dark Cimmerian lake
Spreads from its narrow mouth its vaſt expanſe,
Leave it, and boldly plunge thy vent'rous foot
In the Mæotic ſtraits; the voice of fame
Shall eternize thy paſſage, and from thee
Call it the Boſphorus[d]: there ſhalt thou quit
The ſhores of Europe, and intrepid reach
The continent of Aſia.—Seems he now,
This tyrant of the ſkies, ſeems he in all[e]

[d] Boſphorus, the paſſage of the heifer.

[e] The Chorus had declared themſelves to be deeply affected at the narrative of Iö; Prometheus therefore, having enumerated more and greater woes which yet awaited her, addreſſes them thus: Think you that this tyrant of the ſkies is of a fierce and headlong violence, when he has thus driven a mortal, even whilſt he is a ſuiter for her love, to theſe wanderings? Then turning to the unhappy ſufferer, he ſays,

A rugged woer, virgin, have thy charms
Won thee.

There is in this a malignant triumph, well ſuited to the implacable reſentment of the ſpeaker, which would not allow him to acknowledge that Jupiter did not voluntarily inflict theſe miſeries on his favourite fair, but that with great reluctance he was obliged to make this ſacrifice to the jealous and enraged Juno.

Of

Of fierce and headlong violence, when his love
Plunges a mortal in ſuch deep diſtreſſes?
A rugged woer, virgin, have thy charms
Won thee; for be aſſur'd what I have told thee
Is but a prelude to the woes untold.

IO.

Ah miſerable me!

PROMETHEUS.

Again that exclamation, that deep groan!
What wilt thou do, when thou ſhalt learn the reſt?

CHORUS.

Remains there ought of ills yet to be told?

PROMETHEUS.

A wide tempeſtuous ſea of baleful woes.

IO.

What then has life deſirable? Why rather
From this rude cliff leap I not headlong down,
And end my woes? Better to die at once,
Than linger out a length of life in pain.

PROMETHEUS.

Ill wou'dſt thou bear my miſeries, by the Fates
Exempt from death, the refuge of th' afflicted.

But

But my afflictions know no bounds, till Jove
Falls from th' imperial ſovereignty of heav'n.

IO.

Shall he then fall? Shall the time come, when Jove[f]
Shall ſink dethron'd? I think I ſhou'd rejoice
To ſee the tyrant's ruin: Shou'd I not,
Since from his hands I ſuffer all theſe ills.

PROMETHEUS.

Then be thou well aſſur'd it ſhall be ſo.

IO.

And who ſhall wreſt th' imperial ſceptre from him?

[f] This is one of thoſe fine touches which diſtinguiſh a maſter's hand. Iö had been cruelly treated, and was ſinking even to deſperation under the ſenſe of the miſeries which ſhe was yet to ſuffer, when ſhe was told that her rugged woer, from whom all her afflictions aroſe, ſhould one day be deprived of the ſovereignty of heaven. Here, inſtead of that pleaſure with which it was ſuppoſed the predicted event would fill her indignant mind, her concealed love juſt riſes to ſoften her reſentment, and then, fearful of a diſcovery, hides itſelf beneath her conſcious dignity, and the modeſt reſerve of her ſex: nay, the very queſtions which ſhe afterwards aſks, apparently to ſhow her joy for the ruin of Jupiter, diſcover the moſt delicate tincture of tender and delicate ſenſibility.

PROME-

PROMETHEUS.

Himſelf, deſtroy'd by his improvident counſels.

IO.

Oh ſay, if harmleſs what I aſk, ſay how.

PROMETHEUS.

Urging a marriage he ſhall dearly rue.

IO.

Heav'n-ſprung, or mortal? If permitted, ſay.

PROMETHEUS.

What matters which? It may not be diſclos'd.

IO.

Shall then a wife deprive him of the throne?

PROMETHEUS.

She greater than the ſire ſhall bear a ſon.

IO.

Has he no means of pow'r t' avert this fate?

PROMETHEUS.

None, till from theſe vile chains I ſhall be free.

IO.

IO.

And who, 'gainſt Jove's high will, ſhall ſet thee free?

PROMETHEUS.

One, of neceſſity, from thee deſcended.

IO.

From me! My ſon releaſe thee from thy pains?

PROMETHEUS.

Third of thy race, firſt numb'ring ten deſcents[g].

IO.

Oracular this, of difficult conjecture.

PROMETHEUS.

Check then thy wiſh, nor ſeek to know thy toils.

IO.

Do not hold forth a grace, then ſnatch it from me.

[g] From Iö deſcended Epaphus, Libye, Belus, Danaus, Hypermneſtra, Abas, Proetus, Acriſius, Danae, Perſeus, Electrion, Alcmena, Hercules.

PROMETHEUS.

Of two relations I will grant thee either.

IO.

Propoſe the two, then leave the choice to me.

PROMETHEUS.

Shall I declare the reſt of thy misfortunes,
Or doſt thou wiſh to know him that ſhall free me?

CHORUS.

The firſt to her, to me this other grace
Vouchſafe, nor my requeſt treat with diſdain.
To her impart what toils remain; to me
Him that ſhall free thee; this I moſt deſire.

PROMETHEUS.

This your requeſt I ſhall not be averſe
To gratify, and tell you all you wiſh.
Firſt for thy various wand'rings: Mark my words,
And grave them on the tablet of thy heart.
When thou ſhalt paſs the flood, the common bound
Of either continent, direct thy ſteps
Right to the firey portals of the eaſt,

The

The ſun's bright walk, along the roaring beach,
Till thou ſhalt come to the gorgonian plains
Of Ciſthine, where dwell the ſwan-like forms
Of Phorcys' daughters, bent and white with age [b];
One common eye have theſe, one common tooth,
And never does the ſun with chearful ray
Viſit them darkling, nor the moon's pale orb
That ſilvers o'er the night. The Gorgons nigh,
Their ſiſters theſe, ſpread their broad wings, and wreath

[b] There is ſomething ſo very ingenious in Mr. Bryant's analyſis of theſe daughters of Phorcys, that the moſt rigid exactors of hiſtorical proof will not be offended to ſee it here laid before the reader. This hiſtory, he ſays, relates to an Amonian temple founded in the extreme parts of Africa, in which there were three prieſteſſes of Canaanitiſh race, who on that account are ſaid to be in the ſhape of ſwans, that bird being the inſigne of their nation. The notion of their having but one eye among them took its riſe from an hieroglyphic very common in Egypt, and probably in Canaan: this was the repreſentation of an eye, which was ſaid to be engraved upon the pediment of their temples. This may have been one reaſon, among others, why the Cyclopians and Arimaſpians are repreſented with one eye,

> The Arimaſpian troops, whoſe frowning foreheads
> Glare with one blazing eye.

Bryant's Analyſis, vol. i. p. 380. For his account of Meduſa, ſee p. 510, &c.

Their

Their horrid hair with ſerpents, fiends abhor'd,
Whom never mortal cou'd behold, and live.
Be therefore warn'd, and let it profit thee
To learn what elſe deteſtable to ſight
Lies in thy way, and dang'rous. Shun the Gryphins,
Thoſe dumb and rav'nous dogs of Jove. Avoid
The Arimaſpian troops, whoſe frowning foreheads
Glare with one blazing eye; along the banks,
Where Pluto rolls his ſtreams of gold, they rein [i]
Their foaming ſteeds; approach them not, but ſeek
A land far diſtant, where the tawny race [k]
Dwell

[i] Pluto is here the name of a river ἀπὸ τοῦ πλούτου, from the gold found there; with which theſe northern parts are by hiſtorians ſaid to abound, but to be inacceſſible on account of the Gryphins, the fierceſt and moſt formidable of all birds, againſt which the Arimaſpians are continually in arms. STANLEY.

[k] The ancients placed the Æthiopians at the extremities of the earth not only towards the ſouth, but to the caſt, and alſo to the weſt; hence they are ſaid to dwell near the fountains of the ſun, ſo Virgil,

Oceani finem juxta ſolemque cadentem
Ultimus Æthiopum locus eſt.

The river Æthiops, Niger, or Nigris, rolls his black ſtream through immenſe deſerts ſcorched with intolerable heat, till it

Dwell near the fountains of the ſun, and where
The Nigris pours his duſky waters; wind
Along his banks, till thou ſhalt reach the fall
Where from the mountains with Papyrus crown'd
The venerable Nile impetuous pours
His headlong torrent; he ſhall guide thy ſteps
To thoſe irriguous plains, whoſe triple ſides
His arms ſurround; there have the Fates decreed
Thee and thy ſons to form the lengthen'd line.—
Is ought imperfect, ought obſcure? Reſume
Th' inquiry, and be taught with greater clearneſs:
I have more leiſure than I wiſh to have.

CHORUS.

If thou haſt ought remaining, ought omitted,
To tell her of her woeful wand'rings, ſpeak it:
If all has been declar'd, to us vouchſafe
The grace we aſk; what, thou rememb'reſt well.

it comes to its laſt cataract; thence it falls into Egypt, and aſſumes the name of the Nile. STANLEY.—"Four miles below Cairo it divideth, making of the richeſt portion of the land a triangular iſland, named Delta, in that it beareth the form of the Greek Δ." SANDYS.

PROMETHEUS.

Her wand'ring in full meaſure has ſhe heard.
That ſhe may know ſhe has not heard in vain,
Her labours paſs'd, e'er theſe rude rocks ſhe reach'd,
Will I recite, good argument that truth
Stamps my predictions ſure: nor ſhall I uſe
A length of words, but ſpeak thy wand'rings briefly.
Soon as thy foot reach'd the Moloſſian ground,
And round Dodona's ridgy heights, where ſtands
The ſeat oracular of Theſprotian Jove,
And, wond'rous prodigy, the vocal groves,
Theſe in clear, plain, unqueſtionable terms
Hail'd thee "Illuſtrious wife of Jove that ſhall be,"
If that may ſooth thy ſoul. The tort'ring ſting
Thence drove thee wand'ring o'er the wave-waſh'd ſtrand
To the great gulf of Rhea, thence thy courſe
Thro' the vex'd billows hither. But know this,
In after times ſhall that deep gulph from thee
Be call'd th' Ionian, and preſerve to men
The memory of thy paſſage. This to thee,
Proving the præſcience of my mind, that ſees

More

More than appears: The reſt to you and her,
Reſuming my diſcourſe, I ſpeak in common.
On the land's extreme verge a city ſtands,
Canobus, proudly' elevate, nigh where the Nile
Rolls to the ſea his rich ſtream: there ſhall Jove
Heal thy diſtraction, and with gentle hand
Sooth thee to peace. Of his high race a ſon,
The duſky Epaphus, ſhall riſe, and rule
The wide extended land o'er which the Nile
Pours his broad waves. In the fifth line from him
Fifty fair ſiſters ſhall return to Argos
Unwillingly, to fly the kindred beds
Of fifty brothers; theſe with eager ſpeed,
Swift as the faulcon's flight when he purſues
The dove at hand, ſhall follow, nor obtain
The nuptials, which th' indignant gods deny.
Theſe ſhall Pelaſgia ſee by female hands
Welt'ring in gore, the night's convenient gloom
Fav'ring the daring deed; each female draws
The trenchant ſword, and in her huſband's blood
Stains the broad blade. Thus fatal to my foes
Be love! Yet one ſhall feel its ſofter flame
Melting her ſoul, and from the general carnage
Preſerve her huſband, chuſing to be deem'd

Of baſe degenerate ſpirit, rather than ſtain
Her gentle hands with blood. From her ſhall Argos
Receive a long imperial line of kings.
The full diſtinct relation wou'd be tedious.
From her ſhall riſe the hero, ſtrong to wing
The dreaded ſhaft; he from theſe tort'ring pains
Shall ſet me free: this my age-honour'd mother,
Titanian Themis, with oracular voice
Foretold; but when, or how, requires a length
Of narrative, which known wou'd nought avail thee.

IO.

Ah me! Ah wretched me! That pang again!
Again that firey pang, whoſe mad'ning ſmart
Corrodes and rankles in my breaſt! With fear
My heart pants thick; wildly my eyeballs roll;
Diſtraction drives my hurried ſteps a length
Of weary wand'ring; my ungovern'd tongue
Utters tumultuous ravings, that roll high
The floods of paſſion ſwoln with horrid woes.

PROMETHEUS, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

STROPHE.

Was it not wiſdom's ſovereign pow'r
That beam'd her brighteſt, pureſt flame,
T' illume her ſage's ſoul the thought to frame[1],
And cloath with words his heav'n-taught lore?
" Whoe'er thou art, whom young deſire
Shall lead to Hymen's holy fire,
Chuſe, from thy equals chuſe thy humble love:
Let not the pomp of wealth allure thine eye,
Nor high-trac'd lineage thy ambition move;
Ill ſuits with low degree t' aſpire ſo high."

ANTISTROPHE.

Never, O never may my fate
See me a ſplendid victim led
To grace the mighty Jove's imperial bed,
Or ſhare a god's magnific ſtate.
When Iö's miſeries meet my eyes,
What horrors in my ſoul ariſe!

[1] This ſage was Pittacus of Mitylene, one of the ſeven celebrated wiſe men of Greece.

Her virgin boſom, harb'ring high intent,
In man delights not, and his love diſdains;
Hence the dire peſt by wrathful Juno ſent,
Her wide wild wand'rings hence, and agoniz-
ing pains.

EPODE.

Me leſs ambitious thoughts engage,
And love within my humbler ſphere:
Hence my ſoul reſts in peace ſecure from fear,
Secure from danger's threat'ning rage.
Me may the pow'rs that rule the ſky
Ne'er view with love's reſiſtleſs eye:
Ah, never be th' unequal conflict mine,
To ſtrive with their inextricable love:
Might not my heart againſt itſelf combine?
Or how eſcape the pow'rful arts of Jove?

PROMETHEUS.

Yet ſhall this Jove, with all his ſelf-will'd pride,
Learn humbler thoughts, taught by that fatal
marriage,
Which from the lofty throne of ſovereign rule
Shall ſink him to a low and abject ſtate,

And

And on his head fulfil his father's curſe,
The curſe of Saturn, vented in that hour
When from his ancient royalty he fell.
Of all the gods not one, myſelf except,
Can warn him of his fate, and how to ſhun
Th' impending ruin. I know all, and how.
Let him then ſit, and glorying in his height
Roll with his red right hand his vollied thunder
Falſely ſecure, and wreath his bick'ring flames.
Yet nought ſhall they avail him, nor prevent
His abject and diſhonorable fall.
Such rival adverſary forms he now
Againſt himſelf, prodigious in his might,
And unaſſailable; whoſe rage ſhall roll
Flames that ſurpaſs his lightnings, fiercer bolts
That quaſh his thunders; and from Neptune's hand
Daſh his trined mace, that from the bottom ſtirs
The troubled ſea, and ſhakes the ſolid earth.
Cruſh'd with this dreadful ruin ſhall he learn
How different, to command, and to obey.

CHORUS.

Thy ominous tongue gives utterance to thy wiſh.

PROMETHEUS.

It is my wiſh, and ſhall be ratified.

CHORUS.

What, ſhall high Jove bend to a greater lord?

PROMETHEUS.

And to a yoke more galling ſtoop his neck.

CHORUS.

Doſt thou not fear, vaunting this bold diſcourſe?

PROMETHEUS.

What ſhou'd I fear, by Fate exempt from death?

CHORUS.

But he may add freſh tortures to thy pain.

PROMETHEUS.

Let him then add them, I await them all.

CHORUS.

Wiſe they, who reverence the ſtern pow'r of vengeance.

PROMETHEUS.

Go then, with prompt ſervility fall down
Before your lord, fawn, cringe, and ſue for grace.

For

For me, I value him at leſs than nothing.
Let him exert his brief authority,
And lord it whilſt he may; his pow'r in Heav'n
Shall vaniſh ſoon, nor leave a trace behind.—
But ſee, his meſſenger haſtes on amain,
Th' obſequious lacquey of this new-made monarch:
He comes, I ween, the bearer of freſh tidings.

MERCURY, PROMETHEUS, CHORUS.

MERCURY.

To thee grown old in craft, deep drench'd in gall,
Diſguſtful to the gods, too prodigal
Of interdicted gifts to mortal man,
Thief of the fire of Heav'n, to thee my meſſage.
My father bids thee ſay what nuptials theſe
Thy tongue thus vaunts as threat'ning his high pow'r;
And clearly ſay, couch'd in no riddling phraſe,
Each ſeveral circumſtance; propound not to me
Ambiguous terms, Prometheus; for thou ſeeſt
Jove brooks not ſuch, unfit to win his favour.

PROME-

PROMETHEUS.

Thou doeſt thy meſſage proudly, in high terms,
Becoming well the ſervant of ſuch lords.
Your youthful pow'r is new; yet vainly deem ye
Your high-rais'd tow'rs impregnable to pain:
Have I not ſeen two ſovereigns [m] of the ſky
Sink from their glorious ſtate? And I ſhall ſee
A third, this preſent lord, with ſudden ruin
Diſhonorably fall. What, ſeem I now
To dread, to tremble at theſe new-rais'd gods?
That never ſhall their force extort from me.
Hence then, the way thou cameſt return with ſpeed:
Thy vain inquiries get no other anſwer.

MERCURY.

Such inſolence before, ſo firey fierce,
Drew on thy head this dreadful puniſhment.

PROMETHEUS.

My miſeries, be aſſur'd, I would not change
For thy gay ſervitude, but rather chuſe
To live a vaſſal to this dreary rock,

[m] Ouranus dethroned by his ſon Saturn, and Saturn by his ſon Jupiter.

Than

Than lacquey the proud heels of Jove. Theſe words,
If inſolent, your inſolence extorts.

MERCURY.

I think thou art delighted with thy woes.

PROMETHEUS.

Delighted! Might I ſee mine enemies
Delighted thus! And thee I hold among them.

MERCURY.

And why blame me for thy calamities?

PROMETHEUS.

To tell thee in a word, I hate them all,
Theſe gods; of them I deſerv'd well, and they
Ungrateful and unjuſt work me theſe ills.

MERCURY.

Thy malady, I find, is no ſmall madneſs.

PROMETHEUS.

If to deteſt my enemies be madneſs,
It is a malady I wiſh to have.

MERCURY.

Were it well with thee, who cou'd brook thy pride?

PROMETHEUS.

Ah me!

MERCURY.

That ſound of grief Jove doth not know.

PROMETHEUS.

Time, as its age advanceth, teaches all things.

MERCURY.

All its advances have not taught thee wiſdom.

PROMETHEUS.

I ſhou'd not elſe waſte words on thee, a vaſſal.

MERCURY.

Nought wilt thou anſwer then to what Jove aſks.

PROMETHEUS.

If due, I wou'd repay his courteſy.

MERCURY.

Why am I check'd, why rated as a boy?

PROMETHEUS.

A boy thou art, more ſimple than a boy,
If thou haſt hopes to be inform'd by me.
Not all his tortures, all his arts ſhall move me
T' unlock my lips, till this curs'd chain be loos'd.
No, let him hurl his flaming lightnings, wing
His whitening ſnows, and with his thunders ſhake
The rocking earth, they move not me to ſay
What force ſhall wreſt the ſceptre from his hand[n].

MERCURY.

Weigh theſe things well, will theſe unlooſe thy chains?

[n] It is not neceſſary to ſend the ladies to Pindar for their information in this celeſtial anecdote, as our courtly Lanſdowne in his Maſk of Peleus and Thetis is ready to diſcover the ſecret. Jupiter beheld the charms of Thetis, daughter of Oceanus, with the eye of a lover, and intended to advance her as his conſort to the imperial throne of Heaven. Now it was in the Fates that this lady ſhould have a ſon, who was to be greater than his father. Prometheus alone, by his divine foreſight, could open the danger to Jupiter; but this he firmly refuſed to do, till he ſhould be releaſed from the rock. After that Hercules, by the permiſſion of Jupiter, had killed the tormenting eagle, and unbound his chains, he diſcloſed the decree of the Fates: Thetis was given in marriage to Peleus, and the prophecy was accompliſhed in the famous Achilles.

PROME-

PROMETHEUS.

Well have they long been weigh'd, and well conſider'd.

MERCURY.

Subdue, vain fool, ſubdue thy inſolence,
And let thy miſeries teach thee juſter thoughts.

PROMETHEUS.

Thy counſels, like the waves that daſh againſt
The rock's firm baſe, diſquiet but not move me.
Conceive not of me that, thro' fear what Jove
May in his rage inflict, my fix'd diſdain
Shall e'er relent, e'er ſuffer my firm mind
To ſink to womaniſh ſoftneſs, to fall proſtrate,
To ſtretch my ſupplicating hands, intreating
My hated foe to free me from theſe chains.
Far be that ſhame, that abject weakneſs from me.

MERCURY.

I ſee thou art implacable, unſoften'd
By all the mild intreaties I can urge;
But like a young ſteed rein'd, that proudly ſtruggles,

And

And champs his iron curb, thy haughty ſoul
Abates not of its unavailing fierceneſs.
But pride, diſdaining to be rul'd by reaſon,
Sinks weak and valueleſs. But mark me well,
If not obedient to my words, a ſtorm,
A firey and inevitable deluge
Shall burſt in threefold vengeance on thy head.
Firſt, his fierce thunder wing'd with lightning flames
Shall rend this rugged rock, and cover thee
With hideous ruin: long time ſhalt thou lie
Aſtonied in its rifted ſides, till drag'd
Again to light; then ſhall the bird of Jove,
The rav'ning eagle, lur'd with ſcent of blood,
Mangle thy body, and each day returning,
An uninvited gueſt, plunge his fell beak,
And feaſt and riot on thy black'ning liver.
Expect no pauſe, no reſpite, till ſome god
Comes to relieve thy pains, willing to paſs
The dreary realms of ever-during night *,
The dark deſcent of Tartarus profound.

Weigh

* The ſcholiaſt explains this paſſage by ſaying, that whoever ſhould attempt to ſuccour Prometheus, and deliver him from

Weigh theſe things well; this is no fiction dreſt
In vaunting terms, but words of ſerious truth.
The mouth of Jove knows not to utter falſehood,
But what he ſpeaks is fate. Be cautious then,
Regard thyſelf; let not o'erweening pride
Deſpiſe the friendly voice of prudent counſel.

CHORUS.

Nothing amiſs we deem his words, but fraught
With reaſon, who but wills thee to relax
Thy haughty ſpirit, and by prudent counſels
Purſue thy peace: be then adviſ'd; what ſhame
For one ſo wiſe to perſevere in error?

PROMETHEUS.

All this I knew e'er he declar'd his meſſage.
That enemy from enemy ſhou'd ſuffer
Extreme indignity is nothing ſtrange.
Let him then work his horrible pleaſure on me;
Wreath his black curling flames, tempeſt the air
With vollied thunders and wild warring winds,

from his pain, ſhould himſelf be ſent to the ſhades of Orcus, and the dark abyſs of Tartarus. The words are very remarkable; for want of a better explication of them, we muſt take up with this.

Rend

Rend from its roots the firm earth's ſolid baſe,
Heave from the roaring main its boiſterous waves,
And daſh them to the ſtars; me let him hurl,
Caught in the firey tempeſt, to the gloom
Of deepeſt Tartarus; not all his pow'r
Can quench th' ætherial breath of life in me.

MERCURY.

Such ravings, ſuch wild counſels might you hear,
From moon-ſtruck madneſs. What is this but madneſs?
Were he at eaſe, wou'd he abate his frenzy?
But you, whoſe gentle hearts with ſocial ſorrow
Melt at his ſuff'rings, from this place remove,
Remove with ſpeed, leſt the tempeſtuous roar
Of his fierce thunder ſtrike your ſouls with horror.

CHORUS.

To other themes, to other counſels turn
Thy voice, where pleaded reaſon may prevail:
This is ill urg'd, and may not be admitted.
Wou'dſt thou ſolicit me to deeds of baſeneſs[p]?
Whate'er betides, with him will I endure it.

The

[p] The Chorus throughout this tragedy find themſelves in a very delicate and difficult ſituation. Conſanguinity and affec-

The vile betrayer I have learn'd to hate;
There is no fouler ſtain, my ſoul abhors it.

MERCURY.

Remember you are warn'd; if ill o'ertake you
Accuſe not Fortune, lay not the blame on Jove,
As by his hand ſunk in calamities
Unthought of, unforeſeen: no, let the blame
Light on yourſelves; your folly not unwarn'd,
Not unawares, but 'gainſt your better knowledge,
Involv'd you in th' inextricable toils.

tion brought them to the rock to commiſerate the afflictions of Prometheus; hence they became intereſted in the action: as his ſufferings were unjuſt, their office, which led them to favour the good, led them alſo to expreſs their diſapprobation of his puniſhment; but as it was inflicted by Jupiter, their piety and reverence would not permit them to oppoſe the king of the gods; all that remained for them was to condole with him, to give him friendly counſel, and to ſoften his inflamed reſentment: their character is preſerved with wonderful propriety and decorum. Even at the laſt, when nothing could prevail with him to abate his implacable ſpirit, and Mercury with much tenderneſs adviſed them to retire, and avoid the impending ſtorm, they anſwer with a becoming firmneſs, that they could not be guilty of ſuch a deed of baſeneſs; ancient manners, which conſidered the deſertion of a friend as the vileſt of actions, required this ſacrifice of their own ſafety.

PROMETHEUS.

He fables not; I feel in very deed
The firm earth rock; the thunder's deep'ning roar
Rolls with redoubled rage; the bick'ring flames
Flaſh thick; the eddying ſands are whirl'd on high;
In dreadful oppoſition the wild winds
Rend the vex'd air; the boiſt'rous billows riſe
Confounding ſea and ſky; th' impetuous ſtorm
Rolls all its terrible fury on my head.
Seeſt thou this, aweful Themis; and thou, Æther,
Thro' whoſe pure azure floats the general ſtream
Of liquid light, ſee you what wrongs I ſuffer!

THE

SUPPLICANTS.

THE

SUPPLICANTS.

THE fire and fury, that rages through the former Play, is agreeably contraſted, where perhaps the reader leaſt expected it, with the ſober ſpirit of the daughters of Danaus. Theſe illuſtrious Supplicants are drawn indeed with a firmneſs of ſoul becoming their high rank, but tempered with a modeſt and amiable ſenſibility, and an intereſting plaintiveneſs, that might have been

a model even to the gentle and paſſionate Ovid; and that heart muſt have little of the fine feelings of humanity, that does not ſympathize with their diſtreſs. The provident wiſdom of their father Danaus, the calm but firm dignity of Pelaſgus, the inviolable attachment to the laws of hoſpitality, the ſolemn ſenſe of religion, and the chaſteneſs of ſentiment through the whole, muſt pleaſe every mind that is capable of being touched with the gracious ſimplicity of ancient manners.

The ſcene is near the ſhore, in an open grove cloſe to the altar and images of the Gods preſiding over the ſacred games, with a view of the ſea and the ſhips of Ægyptus on one ſide, and of the towers of Argos on the other; with hills, and woods, and vales, a river flowing between them; all together with

with the perſons of the drama forming a picture, that would have well employed the united pencils of Pouſſin and Claude Lorain.

Perſons

Perſons of the Drama.

CHORUS, the Daughters of DANAUS.

DANAUS.

PELASGUS.

HERALD.

THE

SUPPLICANTS.

CHORUS[a].

PROTECTOR of the ſuppliant, gracious Jove,
Look with an eye of pity on this train,
Which from the gentle depths of Nile have ſped
Their naval enterprize. Thoſe ſacred fields,
That border on the Syrian waſtes, we leave,

[a] Danaus, the fourth in deſcent from Iö, had *fifty* daughters; his brother Ægyptus had fifty ſons. It was much for the intereſt of Ægyptus to unite the families and the kingdoms, by marrying his ſons to the daughters of his brother; but the propoſal, which was urged with ſuch violence and rudeneſs, was ſo diſagreeable to Danaus and his female train, that they ſailed from the mouth of the Nile, and ſought refuge on the coaſt of Greece, where we find them juſt arrived.

Not

Not by the public voice of juſtice doom'd [b]
For blood, but willing fugitives from youths
Too near allied, whoſe impious love wou'd raiſe
Perforce the nuptial bed by us abhor'd;
Sons of Ægyptus they. Our father Danaus,
On whoſe authority we build our counſels,
And ſtrengthen our abhorrence, plan'd theſe meaſures,
And wrought us to this honorable toil,

[b] The laws of ancient Greece were ſevere, not ſanguinary, till Draco; they permitted even the murderer to atone for his crime by baniſhment, which often was voluntary, ſometimes the puniſhment inflicted by the ſtate; there are many inſtances in Homer; in Statius Tydeus, ſtain'd with a brother's blood, fled a voluntary exile to the court of Adraſtus: hence the Furies, declaring their office to Minerva, tell her

'Tis ours to drive the murderer from the houſe.

Tyndarus, in the Electra of Euripides, urges this ſtrongly againſt Oreſtes,

Deaf to the call of juſtice he infring'd
The firm authority of the public laws;
For when beneath my daughter's murdering axe
The royal Agamemnon bow'd his head,
He ought to have call'd the laws, the righteous laws,
T' avenge the blood, and by appeal to them
Have driven his mother from this princely manſion:
Thus 'midſt his ills calm reaſon had borne rule,
Juſtice had held its courſe, and he been righteous.

To

To wing our ſwift flight o'er the billowy main,
And reach the ſhores of Argos [c], whence we draw
Our vaunted lineage, from th' embrace of Jove
Enamour'd of that virgin, whom transform'd
The tort'ring ſting drove wand'ring o'er the world.
To what more friendly region can we take
Our progreſs, bearing in our ſuppliant hands
Theſe peaceful branches crown'd with ſacred
wreaths [d]?

Ye

[c] We have here indubitable marks of a colony moving from Ægypt to ſettle in Greece; and as theſe emigrants came forward under the auſpices of their tutelary Iſis, we might well expect to find the ſymbol of that goddeſs. The national vanity of the Grecians was hurt to ſee theſe ſtrangers give birth to an illuſtrious line of kings and heroes, whoſe glory eclipſed that of their own Autocthones; but their lively imagination ſoon found a remedy for this; it created a daughter from their Inachus, dreſſed her out with every charm that might engage the love of Jupiter, tranſmuted the ſymbolical into a real heifer, and ſent her into Ægypt, there to bring forth the famous Epaphus. Now theſe emigrants might be received with a good grace, as being originally of Argive extraction; and Greece, in return for a colony, gratuitouſly preſented Ægypt with a goddeſs.

[d] It was uſual for ſupplicants to ſtretch forth in their hands branches of olive bound with wreaths of wool; ſee the Furies, p. 393. v. ult. Euripides expreſſes this by ἱκετῆρι θαλλῷ. So Virgil,

Et

Ye royal tow'rs, thou earth, and ye fair ſtreams
Of orient chryſtal, ye immortal gods
In the high heav'ns enthron'd, ye aweful pow'rs
That deep beneath hold your tremendous ſeats,
Jove the preſerver, guardian of the roof
Where dwells the pious man, receive your ſup-
pliants,
Breathe o'er theſe realms your favorable ſpirit,
And form them to receive this female train!
But for thoſe men, that proud injurious band
Sprung from Ægyptus, e'er they fix their foot
On this moiſt ſhore, drive them into the deep,
With all their flying ſtreamers and quick oars,
There let them meet the whirlwind's boiſt'rous
rage,
Thund'rings, and light'nings, and the furious blaſts
That harrow up the wild tempeſtuous waves,
And periſh in the ſtorm, e'er they aſcend

Et vittâ comptos voluit prætendere ramos. Æn. 8. v. 128.

The olive was an emblem of peace, and Servius tells us, that its branches were bound with wool, the lamb being the gentleſt of animals, to ſhow the weak and defenceleſs ſtate of the preſenter.

To

Our kindred bed, and ſeize againſt our will
What nature and the laws of blood deny [c].

To thee, th' avenging pow'r
Ador'd beyond the waves of this wide main,
Raiſe we the ſolemn ſtrain,
Her progeny, that crop'd each various flow'r
Which deck'd the fragrant mead,
Till Jove's ſoft touch her alter'd ſhape careſs'd,
And ſooth'd her ſoul to reſt:
Thereto we add thy fate-appointed name,
Epaphus of mighty fame,
To thee we raiſe the ſtrain, whilſt now we tread
Thy reverenc'd mother's fertile ſoil,
And record each various toil;
Now ſhall each trace to light be brought,
Tho' far ſurpaſſing human thought;
Now ſhall the wond'rous tale unfold,
Myſterious deeds of times of old.

[c] There does not appear to be any thing in nature, or in the cuſtoms of antiquity, to hinder marriages within this line of conſanguinity. When Pelaſgus aſks theſe ſupplicants whether their laws forbid ſuch alliances, they anſwer evaſively; this allegation muſt therefore be conſidered only as an oratorical exaggeration.

Dwells

Dwells in this land ſome augur near?
If theſe ſad wailings reach his ear,
Will he not deem the mournful note
Warbled from Philomela's throat,
Such time as from the falcon's wing
She leaves her fav'rite haunt and ſpring,
And o'er her neſt, and o'er her young
Attunes her ſweeteſt, ſaddeſt ſong,
And in the melancholy ſtrain
Laments the fate of Itys ſlain;
In ſullen rage the mother ſtands,
And in her ſon's blood bathes her hands.
In notes ſo ſweet, ſo ſad, I try
To raiſe th' Iönian harmony;
And rend theſe cheeks, that ripening drew
On Nile's warm banks their vermeil hue;
Whilſt at each ſolemn, penſive pauſe
My burſting heart the deep ſigh draws,
And, woe-betroth'd, fears e'en its friends,
If yet perchance one friend attends,
For that our ſails the deep explore,
Leaving our native duſky ſhore.

Ye Gods, from whom we proudly trace
The glories of our high-born race,
Hear us, ye pow'rs, propitious hear,
And ſhow that juſtice is your care;
Guard in our juſt, our holy cauſe
The ſanctity of nature's laws;
You, that abhor each impious deed,
Ariſe, protect the nuptial bed.
When Mars to ſlaughter gives the reins[f],
And rages o'er th' enſanguin'd plains,
To each that flies the altar gives
A refuge, and the ſuppliant lives,
For Jove, with pious pray'rs ador'd,
Commands ſtern war to drop the ſword.

Jove's firm decree, tho' wrapt in night,
Beams 'midſt the gloom a conſtant light;

[f] There is a difficulty in the original, owing probably to a corrupted text, which no annotator has yet cleared; the general idea is very obvious, ſupplicants fly for protection to the altars of the gods, which afford refuge even in the violence of war. Plutarch expreſſes the ſame ſentiment, ἔστι δούλῳ φεύξιμος βωμός. καὶ πολεμίους φεύγοντες, ἂν ἀγάλματος λάβωνται ἢ ναοῦ, θαρροῦσι. De Superſtitione. It is well known how impious it was held by the Grecians to offer violence to thoſe who had ſate as ſupplicants at their altars.

Man's fate obſcure in darkneſs lies,
Not to be pierc'd by mortal eyes:
The juſt reſolves of his high mind
A glorious conſummation find;
Tho' in majeſtic ſtate enthron'd
Thick clouds and dark incloſe him round,
As from the tow'r of heav'n his eye
Surveys bold man's impiety;
Till, his ripe wrath on vengeance bent,
He arms each god for puniſhment [ε],
And from his high and holy throne
Sends all his aweful judgments down.
And may his eye our wrongs ſurvey,
Mark'd by inſulting man his prey;
As each bold youth by paſſion fir'd
Againſt our boſom-peace conſpir'd,

ε This ſenſe ariſes from the plain and literal conſtruction of the text; ſententia eſt optima, and every attempt to alter it has only tortured it into obſcurity.

This alludes to the ſolemn lamentations, the θρηνωδίαι, chanted by their friends at the funerals of the deceaſed. Milton, that exact obſerver of ancient manners, makes his Chorus break out into one of theſe mournful ſongs on the news of Sampſon's death, till Manoa checks them, thinking it more prudent to bury his ſon with ſilent obſequies.

And

And to deceit's ſmooth influence
Join'd rude and boiſt'rous violence:
An infant foreſt theſe, that ſhoot
Their wild growth from one parent root,
And o'er our freſh bloom ſtrive to ſpread
Their chearleſs and malignant ſhade.
Thus I attune my notes of woe,
And bid the varied meaſures flow;
Now the ſhrilling deſcant chaſe,
Now ſolemn ſink the deep'ning baſe;
Thus bid the warbled cadence 'plain,
And ſteep in tears the mournful ſtrain;
A ſtrain to grace my obſequies,
Whilſt yet I view yon' golden ſkies.

Ye riſing hills that crown this ſhore,
Where Apis reign'd in years of yore,
Propitious hear me, nor diſdain
To let your echoes learn this ſtrain;
Barbaric tho' my voice and rude,
Well may its notes be underſtood;

Barbaric tho' this purfled ſtole [h],
Frounc'd around with linen roll,
This bluſhing veil tho' Sidon gave,
Ye hills of Apis hear, and ſave!

[h] The ſcholiaſt, following the uſual interpretation of the word, explains ξὺν λαχίδι by rending their robes, and, amidſt the ſilence of the other annotators, he has the ſanction of the learned Mr. Heath. This was a deed expreſſive of the laſt deſpair; we have an inſtance of this in the ſiege of Thebes; and in the Perſians, when Xerxes rends his robes, we hear of it enough, it completes the diſtreſs of his mother, and even of his father's ſhade; but in all theſe places the word uſed is either ἐρέικω, or ῥήγνυμι: an author is the beſt commentator on himſelf; wherever λαχὶς is uſed by Æſchylus, it ſignifies what the Latin language expreſſes by lacinia, and the Engliſh by lace or fringe: Perſæ, l. 837. where this idea of rending the ornaments of dreſs is intended to be conveyed, σὺν ἡμοῤῥάγῃσι is added to λαχίδες. The Chorus here are not in a deſperate ſituation, they had eſcaped from their perſecutors, were ſafely landed in Greece, and had hopes of protection from the gods, to whoſe altars they were fled, and from the generous inhabitants of the Apian land, to which they addreſs themſelves for favour, though their voice and dreſs be barbaric, that is, ſhows them to be of a foreign country. Pelaſgus ſpeaks of them as

Gorgeouſly veſted in barbaric ſtoles,
That float in many a fold;

where the word χλίσια will not admit the idea of this ſuppoſed dilaceration.

The

The vow perform'd, the Gods aton'd,
The pious rites with bleſſings crown'd,
Death diſtant waits with ſlacken'd pace,
Nor dares profane the ſacred place.
But will he now his foot repreſs?
Will the kind Gods their votary bleſs?
Ah me! theſe ſwelling waves of woe,
Whither, ah whither will they flow?

Ye riſing hills that crown this ſhore,
Where Apis reign'd in years of yore,
Propitious hear me, nor diſdain
To let your echoes learn this ſtrain;
Barbaric tho' my voice and rude,
Well may its notes be underſtood;
Barbaric tho' this purfled ſtole,
Frounc'd around with linen roll:
This bluſhing veil tho' Sidon gave,
Ye hills of Apis hear, and ſave!

The daſhing oar, the ſwelling ſail,
That caught the favorable gale,
Safe from the ſtorms, nor I complain,
Wafted our frail bark o'er the main.

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All-ſeeing ſovereign ſire, defend,
And guide us to a proſp'rous end;
Save us, O ſave the ſeed divine
Of our great mother's ſacred line;
From man's rude touch O ſave us free,
And help inſnared chaſtity!

Thou, virgin daughter of high Jove,
A virgin's vows hear, and approve;
Holding thy ſober, aweful ſtate,
Protect us from the touch we hate;
From bold incontinence ſecure,
Pure thyſelf, preſerve us pure;
Save us, O ſave the ſeed divine
Of our great mother's ſacred line;
From man's rude touch O ſave us free,
And help inſnared chaſtity!

If not, this glowing train, that trace
From Heav'n's high king their high-born race,
Shall voluntary victims go
To th' all-receiving realms below;
To their dread Gods for refuge fly,
If Heav'n's high pow'rs their aid deny.

O ſovereign

O ſovereign Jove, ſhall wrath divine
For Iö ſtill purſue her line?
Still thy dread queen in fury riſe,
And in her cauſe arm all the ſkies?
She wings theſe winds, this tempeſt ſpreads,
That burſts in vengeance o'er our heads.
O ſovereign Jove, for this thy ear
No meed of grateful voice ſhall hear;
Thy ſon diſhonour'd, whom of yore
To thee disfigur'd Iö bore.
Turn then, O turn thy gracious eye,
And hear us from thy throne on high!

DANAUS, CHORUS.

DANAUS.

Daughters, this hour demands your utmoſt prudence;
Your father's care, your old and faithful pilot,
Hath held your helm ſafe o'er the dangerous deep;
Behoves you now at land with provident heed
To form your counſels, and attentive mark
My words. Yon' cloud of duſt, tho' tongueleſs, ſpeaks

An army nigh; I hear their wheels of braſs
Loud rattling on their axles; now I view
Chariots and horſe diſtinct, and ſhields, and ſpears
Far gleaming o'er the plain; the lords perchance
That rule theſe realms, inform'd of our arrival,
Advance to us; but bring they minds of peace,
Guiltleſs of violence, or with ruthleſs rage
Ruſh on this train, beſt ſit together, virgins,
Around this altar ſacred to the Gods[1]
Preſiding o'er the games: a ſurer refuge
Than tow'r or ſhield war-proof an altar gives.
Go then with ſpeed, and reverent in your hands
Hold forth theſe ſupplicating branches crown'd
With ſnowy wreaths, enſigns of aweful Jove.

[1] Theſe gods were Jupiter as preſiding over the Olympic games, Neptune as over the Iſthmian, Apollo as inſtitutor of the Pythian.

Inſtituit ſacros celebri certamine ludos,
Pythia de domiti ſerpentis nomine dictos. Ov. Met.

and Mercury, who taught the graceful exerciſes of the Palæſtra,

Qui feros cultus hominum recentum
Voce formaſti catus, et decoræ
More palæſtræ,

With

With modeſt, grave, and decent ſpeech receive
Theſe ſtrangers, as beſeems the wretched ſtate
Of unknown ſupplicants; declare at once
Diſtinct and brief the motives of your flight
Unſtain'd with blood: let not your roving eye
Dart the bold glance, impeaching modeſty.
Be not thy voice heard firſt, nor let its anſwers
Weary their ear; they quickly take offence;
Submiſſive urge thy plea, rememb'ring well
The pride of words ill ſuits thy low eſtate,
A fugitive, a ſtranger, in diſtreſs.

CHORUS.

Wiſe are thy counſels, and with reverend heed
Shall be remember'd, father; and may Jove,
The author of our race, look gracious on us.

DANAUS.

Quick be his aid, ſtrong guardian of our cauſe.

CHORUS.

Thus near I chuſe my ſeat.

DANAUS.

Supreme of Gods,
Pity our ſuff'rings, pity e'er we periſh.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Look with an eye of mercy on thy ſuppliants,
Impart thy grace, and bleſs us with ſucceſs.

DANAUS.

Addreſs you now this creſted bird of Jove [k].

CHORUS.

Thee, radiant Sun, thy tutelary rays
Streaming with gold, ſacred Apollo, God
Once exil'd from the ſkies, to thee I call [l],
Look on our woes, and pity wretched mortals.

[k] The image of Neptune is characteriſed by his Trident, which plainly declares the God; but this adjunct of Apollo is not ſo clear; Pauſanias tells us, that the Grecians worſhiped the Cock as ſacred to Apollo, becauſe he announces the riſing of the ſun. But further than this, they drew their auguries of ſucceſs from this bird: thus the Bœotians formed a joyful preſage of their glorious victory over the Lacedæmonians at Leuctra, from the crowing of the cocks during all the preceding night; for the cock, when he has conquered his rival, proclaims his victory with loud and cheerful crowings; but if conquered, he hides himſelf in ſilence.—Verderii imagines deorum. See alſo Cicero de divinatione, 1 L. xxxv.

[l] This is well put. Apollo was fabled to have been baniſhed from heaven, becauſe he killed the thunder-forging Cyclopes.

DANAUS.

DANAUS.

O ſuccour us, aſſiſt us, gracious pow'r.

CHORUS.

Whom of theſe Gods, whom yet ſhall we invoke?

DANAUS.

Mark you this trident? It declares the God.

CHORUS.

Safe haſt thou brought us o'er the ſwelling ſea,
Receive us then, and ſave us on the ſhore.

DANAUS.

This, in the Grecian rites, is Mercury [m].

CHORUS.

Nothing but good announce thou to the free.

DANAUS.

This common altar, ſacred to theſe Gods,
Approach with awe; the ground is holy; ſit

[m] Danaus does well to explain this image to his daughters; for in the Ægyptian rites Mercury was depicted with his caduceus and talaria indeed, but with the head of a dog, as the latrator Anubis.

Like

Like turtles trembling at the falcon's flight,
The winged foe of all the winged race,
Polluter of his kind; for how can bird,
That preys on bird, be pure? Or how can man,
That from th' unwilling father drags to marriage
Th' unwilling daughter, how can he be chaſte?
Or ſhall the haughty deed e'en after death
Eſcape unpuniſh'd in the realms below?
No: for another Jove[n], they ſay, holds there
His aweful ſeat, and to the guilty dead
Awards juſt vengeance. But be wary, try
The ſanctity of the place: and may it bring
The bleſſing of ſucceſs to crown your hopes.

PELASGUS, DANAUS, CHORUS.

PELASGUS.

What female train addreſs we here, and whence,
Gorgeouſly veſted in barbaric ſtoles

[n] Not only the heavens, but the ſea, and even the infernal regions had each their Jupiter; wherefore this god had an image among the Argives with three eyes, to denote his power over thoſe three regions, which the ancient mythology has divided between the three ſons of Saturn.—Verderius from Pauſanias.

That

That float in many a fold? Our Argos ſees not
Her daughters thus array'd, nor Greece thro' all
Its ſtates. That thus without ſome previous herald,
The public hoſpitality not aſk'd,
Without ſafe conduct, you have boldly ventur'd
To land upon our coaſts, this is moſt ſtrange.
Only theſe boughs, as ſupplicants are wont,
You lay before theſe Gods that o'er the games
Preſide: hence Greece forms one conjecture only,
Of all beſides uncertain what to think,
Till your diſtinct relation clears our doubts.

CHORUS.

As to our habits, thy remarks are juſt.
But how ſhou'd I addreſs thee, as a man
Of private ſtation, or with hallow'd charge
Preſiding here, or chieftain of the ſtate?

PELASGUS.

Nay, anſwer me, and ſpeak with confidence.
Pelaſgus bids you, ſovereign of this land:
My ſire Palæcthon, of high anceſtry
Original with this earth: from me, their king,
The people take their name, and boaſt themſelves

Pelaſgians.

Pelaſgians. O'er a wide extent of land,
Thro' which the Algus flows, and Strymon weſt,
From the Perrhæbians o'er the ſacred heights
Of Pindus, to Pœonia, and beyond
The mountains of Dodona, ſpacious realms,
My empire ſtretches, bounded by the ſea
This way. In ancient times the Apian plains
From Apis drew their honour'd name, the ſon
Of Phœbus, in his father's healing arts
Skill'd: from Naupactus came the heav'n-taught ſage
And clear'd the land of that peſtiferous brood*,
Which the moiſt earth, foul with corrupted gore,
Of old engender'd, fierce with dragon-rage,
A cruel neighbourhood; their horrible pride
The matchleſs Apis quell'd, and freed the land
Of Argos. Hence in ſacred reverence
We hold his memory. Inſtructed thus
Say on, declare your race, and ought beſides:
But know we brook not the long pomp of words.

* We have in this hiſtory clear traces of another colony from Ægypt, whoſe chieftain Apis drove out the barbarous remains of the Ophite race.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Brief will I be, and plain. Of Argive race
We boaſt ourſelves, and draw our vaunted lineage
From her, the lowing mother, in her ſon
Supremely bleſt. All this my words ſhall prove.

PELASGUS.

Unplauſible your tale. Can it be, ſtrangers,
That you're of Argive race? Liker, I ween,
The Lybian damſels, in no wiſe reſembling [p]
Our daughters: ſuch perchance the Nile might rear,
Such in the glowing tint the artiſt's hand
Might mark the Colchian dame; and ſuch, I hear,

[p] The ladies of ancient Greece, like the fair females that grace our happy country, were remarkable for that ſoft and delicate compoſition of colour, which conſiſts of a fine red beautifully intermixed and incorporated with white: when Pelaſgus therefore obſerved the glowing tints of theſe dames, he pronounces them not of Argive race, but readily derives them from ſome warmer clime. Mr. Addiſon, in his Cato, has expreſſed the ſame idea in theſe charming lines,

The glowing dames of Zama's royal court
Have faces flush'd with more exalted charms:
The ſun, that rolls his chariot o'er their heads,
Works up more fire and colour in their cheeks.

The

The wand'ring Indians, mounted on their camels,
Along the tented plains out-ſtretching wide
To Æthiopia's cities; ſuch the troops
Of warlike Amazons; and were your hands
Arm'd with the poliſh'd bow, I might conjecture
You were of theſe; therefore I thirſt to know
More fully, how you are of Argive race.

CHORUS.

Fame ſpeaks of Iö, in this Argive land
The ſacred guardian of the fane of Juno.
Her, as the common voice loudly reports——

PELASGUS.

Reports it that the Thunderer, of her charms
Enamour'd, with a mortal mix'd the god?

CHORUS.

And met in ſecret ſhades, conceal'd from Juno.

PELASGUS.

How ended then the bickerings of theſe pow'rs?

CHORUS.

The Argive queen transform'd her to an heifer.

PELASGUS.

PELASGUS.

Does Jove approach her in this fair-horn'd ſhape?

CHORUS.

Himſelf, they ſay, transforming to a bull.

PELASGUS.

What angry meaſures form'd his royal conſort?

CHORUS.

An herdſman ſhe aſſign'd ſtarr'd round with eyes.

PELASGUS.

What herdſman this, and how ſtarr'd round with eyes?

CHORUS.

The earth-born Argus: but him Hermes ſlew.

PELASGUS.

What new device to vex the wretched heifer?

CHORUS.

A winged peſt, arm'd with an horrid ſting:
Thoſe on the banks of Nile call it the bryze.

PELASGUS.

And drove her in long wand'rings from this land.

CHORUS.

Thy words, according well, ſpeak this for me.

PELASGUS.

Reach'd ſhe Canobus, and the walls of Memphis?

CHORUS.

There Jove with gentle hand ſooth'd her to reſt;
There planted his illuſtrious progeny.

PELASGUS.

Who from this heifer boaſts his race divine?

CHORUS.

Hence Epaphus receiv'd his name; from him
Libya, whoſe fair domains extended wide.

PELASGUS.

What other branch ſprung from this mighty root?

CHORUS.

Belus, the father of two ſons; my ſire,
Behold, is one.

PELASGUS.

PELASGUS.

Declare the ſage's name.

CHORUS.

Danaus: his brother, whom by name they call
Ægyptus, is the ſire of fifty ſons.
Thus have I ſhewn thee our high anceſtry;
Protect us then, ſupport an Argive train.

PELASGUS.

You ſeem indeed to draw your origin
Of old from hence: but ſay, how have you dar'd
To leave your father's houſe? What chance conſtrain'd you?

CHORUS.

King of Pelaſgia, various are the ills [q]
Of mortal man; and never may'ſt thou ſee
Misfortune

[q] The addreſs of theſe virgins here deſerves our attention: their father, knowing the quick and volatile temper of the Grecians, had warned them not to let their anſwers weary the ear; Pelaſgus had given them the ſame admonition; hence the Chorus ſays, "brief will I be, and plain:" and thus far indeed all her replies have a modeſt brevity and preciſion; here a trying queſtion had been put to her, which could not be

Misfortune mounting on the ſelf-ſame wing.
Who wou'd have thought we ſhou'd have wing'd
our flight
Thus unexpected to the coaſt of Argos.
Allied of old, amazement in our van,
And ſtrong abhorrence of the nuptial bed!

PELASGUS.

Why, ſay'ſt thou, fly you to theſe Gods for refuge,
Holding theſe freſh-cropt branches crown'd with
wreaths?

CHORUS.

That to the offspring of Ægyptus we
Might not be ſlaves.

PELASGUS.

Whence this reluctance, ſay,
From hate? Or do your laws forbid ſuch nuptials?

CHORUS.

And who wou'd wiſh to make their friends their
lords?

evaded; but as her ſucceſs depended on the reception her anſwer ſhould meet with, ſhe awakes the attention of the king by a fine moral ſentiment, and having thus prepared his mind gives him a direct anſwer, by applying the force of it to her own caſe. There is exquiſite art in this.

PELASGUS.

PELASGUS.

Yet thus the ſtrength of families gains force.

CHORUS.

And to the wretched death is not unwelcome.

PELASGUS.

In what wou'd you engage my honour to you?

CHORUS.

Not to enthrall us to Ægyptus' ſons,
Shou'd they demand us.

PELASGUS.

Arduous is the taſk
Thou wou'dſt injoin me, to provoke new wars.

CHORUS.

O'er him, that ſuccours, Juſtice holds her ſhield.

PELASGUS.

If from the firſt the cauſe were my concern.

CHORUS.

Revere theſe Gods, the guardians of your ſtate,
Encircled with this ſupplicating train.

PELASGUS.

Struck with religious horror I behold
Theſe branches ſhade this conſecrated ſeat.

CHORUS.

Dread then the wrath of Jove, who guards the ſuppliant.
Son of Palæcthon, hear me; with an heart
Prompt to relieve, king of Pelaſgia, hear.
Behold me ſupplicant, an exile, wand'ring,
Like the poor lamb, that on the craggy ſteep
Raiſes her mournful voice, ſecure of help,
And warns her faithful keeper of her danger.

PELASGUS.

I ſee a ſtranger train, with boughs new-pluck'd
Shading theſe Gods that o'er the games preſide.
May their arrival, tho' now ſtrangers here,
Yet hence deſcended, bring no dread event;
Nor from this ſudden, unexpected hap
Let war, which leaſt we wiſh, diſturb our ſtate.

CHORUS.

May Themis, guardian of the ſuppliant, ſprung
From pow'rful Jove, look on our harmleſs flight.

Nor

Nor from a younger let thy age diſdain
To learn the reverence due to ſupplicants,
From whoſe pure hands the fav'ring Gods accept
The grateful offering.

PELASGUS.

Make not your requeſt
To me in private: if pollution ſtains
The public ſtate, the public has the charge
To expiate that ſtain; nor can my voice,
E'er conſultation with the people held,
Warrant the ſanction of the public faith.

CHORUS.

Thou art the ſtate; the public thou; thy voice,
Superior to controul, confirms the ſanction,
This altar gives; thy ſole authority,
High-ſcepter'd monarch of a ſovereign throne,
Is here obey'd: religion's voice pleads for us;
Revere it, nor profane theſe hallow'd ſeats.

PELASGUS.

That profanation to mine enemies.
To grant you my protection cannot be
But with much danger; to reject your pray'rs,

Humanity forbids: perplex'd I fear
To act, or not to act, and fix my choice.

CHORUS.

On Heav'n's high throne he ſits, whoſe watchful eye
Regards th' afflicted, when unfeeling pride
Denies that juſtice which the law aſks for them.
Reverence his pow'r; for when the ſufferer groans
With pangs unpitied, the fix'd wrath of Jove,
Protector of the ſuppliant, burns ſevere[r].

PELASGUS.

If by your country's laws Ægyptus' ſons,
As next of blood, aſſert a right in you,
Who ſhou'd oppoſe them? It behoves thee then
By your own laws to prove ſuch claim unjuſt.

[r] There is great propriety in this plea, to which Pelaſgus was naturally led by Grecian ideas, ariſing from the laws of that country, where orphan virgins were to marry their neareſt of kin, and ſuch were ordered to take them to wife:

Lex eſt, ut orbæ, qui ſint genere proximi,
Eis nubant; et illos ducere eadem hæc lex jubet.—
TER. PHORM.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Ah never may I be perforce a thrall
To man! By heav'n-directed flight I break
The wayward plan of theſe deteſted nuptials.
Arm juſtice on thy ſide, and with her aid
Judge with that ſanctity the Gods demand.

PELASGUS.

No eaſy province: make not me your judge.
Great tho' my pow'r, it is not mine to act *,
I told thee ſo, without my people's voice
Aſſenting; leſt, if ill ariſe, they ſay
By honouring ſtrangers thou' haſt undone thy country.

* The Athenians, and indeed all the ſtates of Greece, were animated with the nobleſt and moſt generous ſpirit of liberty, and the ſtrongeſt abhorrence of a tyrant; for by that name they denoted the man who had uſurped the ſupreme power, and turned the free democracy into a monarchy.

Non quia crudelis ille, ſed quoniam grave
Omne inſuetis onus.

Nay, proud as they were of their own ancient kings, they could not bear to allow them a power inconſiſtent with their free laws, the right which every citizen claimed of giving his voice in the public council, and adding his ſanction to the meaſures which the king was to carry into execution, only in obedience to the will of the people. We have many inſtances of this generous enthuſiaſm.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Each equally allied, impartial Jove
Weighs each in equal balance; but repays
The impious deed with vengeance, to the juſt
Rewards their ſanctity. Why griev'ſt thou then
To emulate the God, and act with juſtice?

PELASGUS.

Matter of high import haſt thou propos'd,
Which not admits heady and fitful raſhneſs,
But deep deliberation, provident care,
Wiſely attentive to the general weal,
That hence no evil riſe, but the event
Be proſp'rous found, firſt, to the ſtate and me;
Next, that no force arreſt you here, nor we
Betray you refug'd in theſe hallow'd ſeats,
The hoſtages of Heav'n, and on our heads
Call ruin and the vengeance of the Gods,
That e'en in death acquits not. Seems not this
Matter of deep debate, and public care?

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Deliberate then with prudent care:
To thy counſels take with thee
Heav'n-commercing piety,
And be ſtedfaſt juſtice near.
Hark! methinks I hear them ſay,
Do not, mighty king, betray
Wretched exiles wand'ring far.
See me not with ruffian hand,
Refug'd at this ſhrine, profan'd,
Learn what boiſt'rous man may dare.
See me not with ruffled veſt[t]
Rent unſeemly from my breaſt,
Looſe my treſſes waving round,
Bridled with this golden brede,
Led, like a reluctant ſteed,
From the Gods that guard this ground.
See each hallow'd image here,
And the aweful pow'rs revere:

[t] This paſſage confirms the obſervations on the word λαχὶς in the former ode. Mr. Heath here tranſlates πολυμίτων πέπλων by peplorum multis liciis textorum: and indeed theſe ladies ſeem to have been very elegantly dreſſed, and to be conſcious enough of it.

At

At thy feet thy ſuppliant laid,
Mighty monarch, hear and aid!
And know, to thee, thy houſe, thy riſing race
Impartial juſtice ſhall repay the deed;
With glory's radiant crown thy virtues grace,
And righteous Jove ſhall ſanctify the meed.

PELASGUS.

Well; I have paus'd, and ponder'd; but each thought
Tells me the fluctuating tide perforce
Will drive me on a war with theſe, or thoſe;
And, like a ſhip with all its anchors out,
I muſt abide the ſtorm: nor will this end
Without calamity, and loſs, and woe.
When the rich houſe in deſolation ſinks,
Its wealth all waſted, bounteous Jove may raiſe
Its ſplendor to outſhine its former ſtate:
Or when the haughty tongue unſeemly bolts
The bitter taunt that ſtings the anguiſh'd heart,
The balm of honied words may heal the wound.
But kindred blood to reck upon the duſt—
No: let the altars blaze, and each due rite
Propitiate ev'ry God t' avert the ill.

Mean-

Meanwhile I keep aloof, wiſhing t' appear
Ignorant of theſe diſputes: and may th' event
Be fortunate beyond my expectation.

CHORUS.

Hear the laſt words of deſperate modeſty.

PELASGUS.

Have I not heard? Speak on, I will attend.

CHORUS.

Seeſt thou theſe braided zones that bind our robes?

PELASGUS.

Ornaments theſe that ſuit your female ſtate.

CHORUS.

Know then the honeſt purpoſe theſe ſhall ſerve.

PELASGUS.

What wou'd thy words intend? Explain thyſelf.

CHORUS.

If honour ſhall not guard this female train—

PELASGUS.

How can theſe binding zones ſecure your ſafety?

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Hanging new trophies on theſe images.

PELASGUS.

Myſterious are thy words; ſpeak plainly to me.

CHORUS.

To tell thee plainly then, I mean ourſelves.

PELASGUS.

I hear the language of an anguiſh'd heart.

CHORUS.

Be ſure of that: I ſpeak our firm reſolves.

PELASGUS.

On ev'ry ſide inevitable ills
Surround me, like a flood, whoſe dang'rous ſurge
Drives me into a vaſt and gulphy ſea,
Where no kind harbour ſhelters from the ſtorm.
Shou'd I not yield you refuge, thou haſt nam'd
A deed of horror not to be ſurpaſs'd:
If with Ægyptus' ſons, whoſe veins are rich
With kindred blood, before our walls I try
The chance of war, what elſe, but bitter loſs

Can

Can be th' event, when in a woman's cauſe
Men ſhed their warm blood on th' embattled plain?
Yet ſtrong conſtraint compels me to revere
The wrath of Jove, whoſe hoſpitable pow'r
Protects the ſuppliant, awefully ſevere.
And thou, age-honour'd father of theſe virgins,
Take in thy hands theſe boughs, place them with ſpeed
On other altars of our country Gods;
That all the citizens may ſee the ſigns
Of your arrival; but of me be ſure
Speak not a word: for this free people love
To tax authority with blame. Some eye
Perchance may melt with pity, and abhor
The boiſt'rous force of theſe injurious men;
Hence ſhall you find more favour from the people;
For nature prompts to ſuccour the diſtreſs'd.

DANAUS.

This reverend, this benevolent regard
To ſtrangers we receive with grateful honour.
But from thy train ſend with me ſome t' attend,
To guide me to the altars of your Gods,

The

The guardians of your ſtate, and to their ſhrines,
With ſafety thro' your ſtreets; for much unlike
Our form, our garb to yours; nor does our Nile
See on its banks a race like thoſe, that tread
The verdant borders of your Inachus:
Hence inſolence may dare the rude affront;
The ſtranger friend by the friend's hand has bled.

PELASGUS.

Attend him; he ſays well; conduct his ſteps
Safe to the ſacred ſhrines, ſeats of the Gods,
Within our walls; and, as you paſs, avoid
Much talk with thoſe you meet, guiding this ſtranger,
Who claims protection from our hallow'd altars.

PELASGUS, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

For him thou' haſt order'd well; ſafe may he go
Appointed thus: but what becomes of me?
What ſhall I do? How wilt thou calm my fears?

PELASGUS.

Leave here thoſe boughs, the enſigns of your toils.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

I leave them, as thy voice and hand directs.

PELASGUS.

Seeſt thou that unfenc'd grove? Take ſhelter there [u].

CHORUS.

How ſhou'd th' unconſecrated grove protect me?

PELASGUS.

Let them have wings, we leave you not their prey.

CHORUS.

Than winged dragons they're more dreadful to us.

PELASGUS.

With better omens be thy words auſpicious [x].

CHORUS.

[u] The ſacred groves were incloſed; the Chorus therefore properly aſks what protection an unconſecrated grove could afford: the anſwer ſhows, that the ſtate would defend them, and they needed not that hallowed aſylum; yet as the danger came upon them before they could be removed by a decree of the ſtate, they fled for refuge to the ſacred grove.

[x] It is well known that the ancients were very ſuperſtitious with regard to well or ill omened words. Tully gives us ſome curious recitals in his book on divination. Nothing

CHORUS.

No marvel if my mind ſinks with its fears.

PELASGUS.

But a king's fear is omenous of ill.

CHORUS.

Be all thy words, be all thy actions happy!

PELASGUS.

Your father will not long be abſent from you;
Meanwhile will I perſuade th' aſſembled people,
If haply I may move them, to receive you
With gen'rous pity: him will I inſtruct
How beſt t' addreſs his ſpeech. Await th' event,
And ſupplicate the Gods, whoſe guardian pow'r
Is worſhip'd here, to grant your hearts' warm wiſh.
This done, I will return; and may perſuaſion
Attend me, and good fortune ſpeed my ſteps.

can be more inauſpicious than a winged dragon; the mention of it was therefore of ill omen: the Chorus excuſe themſelves as being depreſſed with *fear*; this was another ill-omened word, eſpecially when addreſſed to a king; they recover themſelves with this auſpicious wiſh, Be all thy words, be all thy actions happy; which ſhows that ἴυφρανιν cannot be taken actively for animum mihi exhilera.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

STROPHE 1.

Might of the mighty, king of kings,
Supremely bleſt amidſt the bleſt above,
Enthron'd in glory, righteous Jove,
From whom perfection to the perfect ſprings,
Hear us, O hear our fond requeſt,
To pity melt each gen'rous breaſt;
View this bold outrage with indignant eye,
And ſhield us from the injury:
O'ertake their proud bark on the purple main,
Sink it with all its ſable train;
Our female band with pity view,
And think from whoſe rich blood our honour'd race we drew.

ANTISTROPHE 1.

If Argive Iö's blooming grace
Cou'd e'er thy fond enamour'd boſom move
To warm deſire, and rapt'rous love,
The pleaſing memory of her charms retrace.

From her our race divine we boaſt,
Not foreign to this Argive coaſt.
Her foot, in times of old, where now we tread,
Trod the flow'r-enamell'd mead;
And made with lowings loud the foreſts ring,
As from the bryze's tort'ring ſting
O'er many' a realm ſhe wander'd wide,
And dar'd the bounding waves, that world from world divide[y].

STROPHE 2.

Found her foot reſt on Aſia's ſhore,
On paſtoral Phrygia's, or on Lydia's plains,
Or Myſian Teuthra's wide domains?
Wildly Cilicia's rugged mountains o'er,
Pamphilia's various tribes among,
Each ceaſeleſs-flowing ſtream along,
Thro' corn-clad fields, and vallies ever green,
The hallow'd haunts of beauty's queen,
That winged peſt impell'd her foot to rove,
To the divine, all foſt'ring grove,

[y] Alluding to the paſſage of the Boſphorus, which divides Europe from Aſia.

Thro'

Thro' whoſe rich meads, impregn'd with ſnow [z],
Temper'd with torrid beams Nile's healthful waters flow.

ANTISTROPHE 2.

The race that then poſſeſs'd the land,
Struck with aſtoniſhment and pale affright,
Beheld the ſtrange, prodigious ſight:
Diſdaining to be touch'd ſhe trod the ſtrand,
The likeneſs of the lowing race
Now ſoft'ning ſweet to virgin grace [a]:

[z] The moſt ancient opinion was, that the Nile proceeded from the ſnow diſſolving in the mountains of the Upper Æthiopia; this is mentioned by Anaxagoras, Æſchylus, and Euripides. "Than the waters whereof there is none more ſweet; being not unpleaſantly cold, and of all others the moſt wholeſome. Confirmed by that anſwer of Peſcennius Niger to his murmuring ſoldiers, What? crave you wine, when you have the Nilus to drink of? Such is it in being ſo concocted by the ſun, at all times in ſome part directly over it; and by length of courſe, running from ſouth to north (beſides in ambages) above one and forty degrees, &c." SANDYS.

[a] The poet here, by taking Iö under her change from the heifer to her own natural form, has given us the preciſe image of the Ægyptian Iſis, who was repreſented as a moſt elegant woman with lunar horns on her head.—See Verder, Mr. Bryant, and particularly Hiſtoire du Ciel.

They ſaw, and trembled. All her toils at laſt,
Her wand'rings wild, her tortures paſt,
What gentle hand—Eternal Lord 'twas thine;
Thy gentle hand, thy pow'r divine [b]
Sooth, ſoftly ſooth'd her frantic fear,
And from her glowing cheek wip'd ſorrow's modeſt tear.

EPODE.

Now thy pleaſing force employ,
All be love, and all be joy.
Riſing from the ſweet embrace,
Worthy of his radiant race,
Smiles the auſpicious boy.
Time prepares to ſtamp his name
Glorious in the roll of fame;
Earth, thro' ev'ry raptur'd ſcene,
Hails th' ætherial ſon of Jove.
Who cou'd charm Heav'n's angry queen?
Who her hoſtile hate remove?
This the deed of Jove alone,
And this his genuine ſon.

[b] Jupiter reſtored Iö to her former ſhape, and with his gentle hand ſoothed her to peace: hence their illuſtrious ſon had the name of Epaphus, ἀπὸ τῆς ἐπαφῆς.

To

To whom, for juſtice when I raiſe the ſtrain,
To whom, ſave Jove, ſhou'd I complain?
Great, aweful author of our ancient line,
Creative parent, independent lord,
Diſpoſer of the world, righteous, benign,
Sovereign, above the higheſt high ador'd;
Whene'er he deigns to grace ſome favour'd head,
Eaſy alike to him the will, the word, the deed.

DANAUS, CHORUS.

DANAUS.

Be of good courage, daughters; a decree,
Such as you wiſh, this gen'rous ſtate has paſs'd.

CHORUS.

Dear to my ſoul, with grateful tidings fraught,
Hail, reverend parent! But inform us how
Paſs'd the decree; what numbers favour'd us?

DANAUS.

Not one diſcordant voice jarr'd in their counſels.
The fire of youth glow'd in theſe aged veins,
When the whole people their uplifted hands
Wav'd in the air, to witneſs their aſſent

That we might be permitted here to dwell
Free, unreclaimable, inviolate:
That none preſume, native or ſtranger, hence
To lead us; and ſhou'd force be us'd, whoe'er
Aſſiſts not, him the public ſentence drives,
With infamy, an exile from his country.
This the Pelaſgian king advis'd, to us
Benevolent, declaring the fierce wrath
Of Jove, protector of the ſupplicant,
Cou'd not permit this firm and proſp'rous ſtate
To flouriſh; but ſuch double inſult, offer'd
To ev'ry law of hoſpitality
Sacred and civil, wou'd with twofold vengeance
Draw ruin on it. When the Argives heard
Theſe arguments of winning eloquence,
Impatient of the uſual forms, they gave
With hands uplifted their concordant ſuffrage
Friendly to us; thus Jove decreed th' event.

CHORUS.

Come then, my ſiſters, for theſe pious Argives
Breath we ſome pious pray'r, whoſe ſolemn ſtrain
May reach the ear of Jove. And thou, Supreme,
God of the ſtranger, hear a ſtranger's voice
Sincere, unblam'd; and ratify our vows!

STROPHE.

STROPHE.

Ye progeny of Jove, whoſe aweful pow'r
In yon' ætherial plain
Fixes the glories of your reign,
Bend from your radiant ſeats your ear,
Attentive to a virgin's pray'r,
And on this gen'rous race your choiceſt bleſſings ſhow'r.
Never may war, whoſe wanton rage
The thund'ring falchion joys to wield,
Joys, when embattled hoſts engage,
To mow with ruthleſs arm the field;
Never with rude diſcordant roar
Affright the echoes of this ſhore;
Never with hoſtile hand
Wave round theſe glitt'ring tow'rs the blazing brand.
Soft-ey'd humanity dwells here,
That melting to the ſuppliant's tear
Aſſerts our hopeleſs cauſe;
And ſpotleſs piety, whoſe breaſt
Submiſs reveres Jove's high beheſt,
And hoſpitable laws.

Your

Your ſacred ſpirit inſpires the free
To form the gen'rous, bold decree,
And man's rude force diſdain;
To caſt on Heav'n's dread Lord their eye,
The terrors of his vengeance fly,
Nor ſcorn our female train:
He o'er the impious roof his thunders rolls [c],
And aweful in his wrath appalls the guilty ſouls.

ANTISTROPHE.

Our kindred train, ſuppliants of holy Jove,
Pelaſgia's ſons revere,
And make our wrongs their gen'rous care.
For this at ev'ry hallow'd ſhrine
Propitious be each pow'r divine;
For this beneath this ſolemn-ſhaded grove
Our raptur'd invocations riſe,
And Heav'n ſhall hear the pious ſtrains.
Ah! never may malignant ſkies
Blaſt the freſh glories of your plains:
Nor peſtilence with pois'nous breath,
Waſte your thin towns with livid death:

[c] We are indebted to the acumen of Pauw for bringing this ſublime idea to light.

Nor

Nor war's ſtern pow'r deface
The blooming flow'rs that youth's fair ſeaſon grace.
Still may your chiefs, a reverend band,
Around the hallow'd altars ſtand;
And ardent for the ſtate
Pour the warm vow to Heav'n's high Lord,
The great, the juſt; whoſe will ador'd
With hoar law tempers fate [d].
Still riſe new chiefs, a lengthen'd line,
(Kind on their birth, Diana, ſhine!)
The brave, the wiſe, the good:
But never diſcord's dread alarms
Your mad'ning cities rouſe to arms,
And ſtain your ſtreets with blood:
Nor pale diſeaſe her ſickly dews diſplay,
Touch'd by thy golden beams, ambroſial fount of day.

[d] Hoar law, an elegant expreſſion to which the cana fides of the Latins correſponds. Jupiter is now addreſſed as the juſt and righteous king, and therefore governing by the ancient laws of heaven.

EPODE.

EPODE.

Fav'ring ſeaſons grace the year,
Crown with rich fruits your cultur'd plains;
The joyful flock, the ſportive ſteer,
Bound wanton o'er your wide domains.
Each immortal ſhow'ring treaſures,
Wake the ſoft melodious meaſures;
Let the chaſtely-warbled lay
The muſes' rapture-breathing ſhell obey.
Firm may the honours of your laws remain,
And prudence in your counſels reign:
Juſt to yourſelves, and to the ſtranger kind,
May peace to ſleep conſign the bloodleſs ſword;
Each honour to your country's Gods aſſign'd;
Each laurel'd ſhrine with hallow'd rites ador'd;
The parent's hoary head with reverence crown'd;
View this, ye righteous Gods, and ſtretch protection round!

DANAUS, CHORUS.

DANAUS.

I like this well: wiſe are theſe votive ſtrains.
But tho' your father brings unwelcome tidings,

New,

New, and unlook'd for, fear not you th' event.
From yon' high mound, where firſt you ſuppliant ſtood,
I ſaw a ſhip, I mark'd its waving ſtreamer,
Its ſwelling ſails, and all its gallant trim:
Its prow with heedful eye obſerves its way,
Obedient to the helm that guides behind;
Unfriendly ſight! the ſailors too I mark'd,
Conſpicuous in white robes their ſable limbs *.
Th' attendant veſſels, proudly riding, ſweep
The watry way; ſhe foremoſt near the land
Now furls her ſails, and all the ſhouting crew
Bend to the eager oar. Behoves you now
Sedate and ſage attention, nor neglect
Theſe Gods. I haſte to bring their gen'rous aid,
The patrons, the protectors of your cauſe.
Haply ſome herald may be ſent, with charge
To claim you as their prize: it ſhall not be:
Fear not th' event: but ſhou'd our aid come ſlow,
Forget not the protection of this place.

* It had been obſerved before, that the Ægyptian rowers were a ſable train.

Be

Be comforted: the day, the hour ſhall come,
When he, that dares affront the Gods, ſhall feel
Their chaſt'ning vengeance burſting on his head.

CHORUS.

How my frame trembles! Ah, my father, ſee
With winged ſpeed the ſhips arrive; between
No interval of time: my ſtiff'ning limbs
Are chain'd with fear, and ev'ry hope of ſafety,
If ſafety lies in flying far, is loſt.

DANAUS.

Since this decree is paſs'd, fear not, my child;
Argos, I know, will arm in your defence.

CHORUS.

Fatally fierce they are, and on their pride
Deſtruction waits, and never-fated war,
Theſe ſons of old Ægyptus, not to thee
Unknown: E'en now their firm-compacted ſhips
Black o'er the angry deep inſulting ride,
Eager to land their ſable-tinctur'd hoſts.

DANAUS.

DANAUS.

And they ſhall find an hoſt, whoſe toil-ſtrung arms [f]
Relax not in the ſun's meridian heat.

CHORUS.

Forſake me not, ah, leave me not alone,
I pray thee, father: a forſaken woman
Is very weak: their wily, faithleſs minds,
Like obſcene crows, ſpare not the hallow'd altar.

DANAUS.

Now fair befall our cauſe, if their mad rage,
Inſulting thee, my child, inſults the Gods.

CHORUS.

Neither theſe tridents, nor this ſolemn ſcene
Will awe them to refrain their impious hands.
They ſcorn the Gods, and with unhallow'd force
Ruſh madly on, like ſavage, rav'ning dogs.

[f] The gymnaſtic exerciſes of the Grecians, to which they were all trained, formed their bodies to this firmneſs; it is intended here as a ſarcaſm on the Ægyptians, who are ſuppoſed to melt beneath the noon-tide heat.

DANAUS.

DANAUS.

But dogs, they ſay, yield to the maſt'ring wolves[ε];
And the ſoft reed to the firm ſpiked corn.

CHORUS.

They have the force of wild and ſavage beaſts;
We muſt eſcape them therefore, as we may.

DANAUS.

Slow are th' advances of a naval train;
Slow the arrangements of the ſhips; the care
To fix the cables, ſlow; th' experienc'd chiefs
Truſt not too ſoon the biting anchor's hold,
If ſtation'd where no harbour winds around:
And when the golden ſun withdraws his beams,
The gloom of night brings many' an anxious care;
Nor dare they, till their veſſels ride ſecure,

ε As the Chorus had compared the ſons of Ægyptus to ravening dogs, Danaus expreſſes the Grecians by wolves, as ſtronger and fiercer animals; perhaps it would be too great a refinement, with Stanley, to derive the former alluſion from their Anubis, and the latter from the Apollo Λύκιος. The compariſon is continued in the next line, where the papyrus, whoſe root was a common food in Ægypt, is deſpiſed as inferior to the corn of Greece.

Attempt

Attempt to land. But take thou heed, nor let
Thy fears impel thee to neglect the Gods;
But aſk their aid. The ſtate will not diſdain
My age, that tells with youthful warmth its tidings.

CHORUS.

STROPHE 1.

Ye riſing hills, whoſe reverend heads
Majeſtic wave their awe-commanding ſhades,
What woes our ſhudd'ring ſouls await?
Or flying on the wings of fear,
In ſome cavern dark and drear
Deep ſhall we plunge, and hide us from our fate?
Oh that I cou'd as ſmoke ariſe,
That rolls its black wreaths thro' the air;
Mix with the clouds, that o'er the ſkies
Show their light forms, and diſappear:
Or like the duſt be toſt
By ev'ry ſportive wind, till all be loſt!

ANTISTROPHE 1.

Such thoughts in deep deſpair I roll,
The gloom of ſorrow black'ning on my ſoul.

Ah father, the vex'd ocean round
What horrors ſtruck thy aching ſight?
Diſmay, and pale affright,
And wild amazement ſink me to the ground.
Shall then the baſe, deteſted band
With rude touch ſeize us for their own?
No: rather ſhall this daring hand
Prepare for death the conſcious zone;
Rather in deep diſdain
My pale ſhade ſink to Pluto's dreary reign.

STROPHE 2.

Oh might I ſit ſublime in air,
Where watry clouds the freezing ſnows prepare!
Or on a rock whoſe threat'ning brow,
Th' aerial vulture's unreach'd ſeat,
In ſolitary ſtate
Frowns ruinous o'er th' affrighted waſte below:
Roll'd headlong down its rugged ſide,
A mangled carcaſs let me lie,
E'er drag'd a pale, unwilling bride,
Victim to ſad neceſſity;
And my indignant heart
Feel the keen wounds of ſorrow's tort'ring dart.

ANTISTROPHE 2.

Throw me, e'er that deteſted day,
To prowling dogs and rav'nous birds a prey.
No form of death affrights me now:
O thou, aſſign'd the wretches' friend,
To bid his miſeries end,
And in oblivion's balm to ſteep his woe;
Come, gentle death, e'er that ſad hour
Which drags me to the nuptial bed;
And let me find in thy ſoft pow'r
A refuge from the force I dread;
O ſpread thy ſable cloud,
And in its unpierc'd gloom our ſorrows ſhroud!

EPODE.

Higher let your voices riſe,
And ſwell the choral deſcant to the ſkies,
Notes of ſuch a lofty vein,
That Gods may liſten to the ſolemn ſtrain!
Eternal Sire, from Heav'n's high throne,
If thy indignant eye-balls glow
With vengeance at foul deeds below,
Look down, thou Sovereign of the World, look down:

Ægyptus' ſons, a ruffian race,
Our flying footſteps chace;
And on our trembling, weeping band
Advance to lay their vengeful hand:
Extend thy golden ſcales,
For without thee what mortal worth avails?
By land, by ſea,
They ſeek their prey;
Oh, e'er they ſeize it, may the ruffians die!
Again I raiſe the mournful cry.
They come, they come, the haughty foes:
Theſe are but preludes to my woes,
To yon' ſtrong rampires bend your flight;
By ſea, by land they ruſh ſevere,
And with their ſtern and threat'ning air,
The ſoftneſs of our ſex affright.
Look down, thou Sovereign of the World, and ſave!

HERALD, CHORUS.

HERALD.

Hence to the ſhip, hence with your utmoſt ſpeed [h].

CHORUS.

[h] The timid modeſty of theſe virgins, and the ſober piety of Danaus, are finely contraſted with the brutal inſolence and ſacrilegious

CHORUS.

No, never, never; drag me, drag me, ſtab me,
Rend from theſe mangled limbs my bleeding head.

HERALD.

Hence to the ſhip, abandon'd wretches, hence,
That waits to waft you, with your injur'd lords,
O'er the wide billows of yon' briny deep.
Haſte, or this ſpear, with bridal garlands bound [1],
Taught a leſs gentle office, there ſhall place you
Smarting with many' a wound; there ſit, and ſigh.

ſacrilegious violence of the Ægyptian herald: this carries the diſtreſs to its greateſt height, raiſes our pity and terror, and adds a peculiar luſtre to the calm dignity of Pelaſgus in the next ſcene.

[1] Pauwii conjecturâ Νυμφοδέτῳ δορί, haſta quæ ſponſo geritur, et cui annexa eſt ſponſi cauſa, conjecturas omnes quaſcunque hactenus vidi mirâ ſuâ ſuavitate longe longeque ſuperat. But the tranſlator is not to be bantered out of this reading by the Attic wit, nor to be beat out of by the Γυμνοδέτῳ δορί, the σκηπτρῳ ἡλεισι πεπαρμενῳ Heathii. This whole ſcene is ſo difficult, and ſo miſerably mutilated, that the reader of Æſchylus is under the greateſt obligations to Pauw for his free and manly conjectures. If he has not always hit on the true reading, he has at leaſt given a probable and ingenious one, and added ſenſe and ſpirit to that rude and undigeſted maſs, from which none before had been extunded.

No more, I charge you, of theſe froward moods,
Or force ſhall drive them from you.

CHORUS.

Woe is me!

HERALD.

Haſte, quit theſe ſeats, haſte to the ſhips, and go
Inviolate to the city of the pious.

CHORUS.

Ah, never may theſe eyes again behold
That rich enlivening ſtream, which he who drinks
Feels his freſh blood dance lively in his veins.
My unpolluted life amidſt theſe ſeats,
Theſe ſacred ſeats, old man, preſerve me ſacred.

HERALD.

Nay, tell not me; but to the ſhip, the ſhip,
Averſe or not averſe, quick ſhalt thou go;
Or vengeance, chaſt'ning vengeance to thy feet
Add wings, and up the bark's tall ſides purſue thee,

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Ah woe, woe, woe! Barbarian, may the winds
In all their fury hurl thee on the rocks
Of rough Cilicia's brow; or daſh thy corſe
An outcaſt on the ſwelling ſands beneath.

HERALD.

Cry, ſhriek, invoke the Gods; yet ſhalt thou not
Eſcape the ſhip of Ægypt; louder ſhriek,
Cry woe, and woe: if the name pleaſe thee, take it.

CHORUS.

Ah wretched me! Pollution of the land,
How fierce he yells! Inſolent wretch, away,
Thy rude touch wounds me: For this ruffian force,
Riſe, mighty Nile, whelm him beneath thy floods!

HERALD.

Hence, I command you, to the rolling veſſel
Inſtantly hence: if one preſumes to linger,
I pay no reverence to your criſped locks,
This hand perforce ſhall drag her by her treſſes.

CHORUS.

Ah me, immortal Sire! Inſolent Force
Will hurry me away: it drags me now
Intangled in its nets; and all my hopes
Are vaniſh'd like a dream, a duſky dream.
Earth, I adjure thee, ſhield me; ſhield me, Jove,
God of this land; ſave me in this hard conflict.

HERALD.

Gods of this land! They awe not me; my youth
They nouriſh'd not, nor to old age upheld me.

CHORUS.

Near me the ſerpent rolls his train, and ſoon
Will, like a pois'nous viper, dart upon me.
Earth, I adjure thee ſhield me; ſhield me, Jove,
God of this land; ſave me in this hard conflict.

HERALD.

If one of you perverſely lingers here,
Your richly purfled ſtoles ſhall find no mercy.

CHORUS.

Ye rulers of the city, Force o'erpow'rs me.

HERALD.

HERALD.

You ſhall ſee many rulers, doubt not, ſoon,
Ægyptus' ſons; no anarchy is here.

CHORUS.

Unlook'd for ruin comes, O king, upon us.

HERALD.

I muſt uſe force, I ſee, and pluck you hence
Drag'd by the locks, ſince my words move you not.

PELASGUS, HERALD, CHORUS.

PELASGUS.

Whence theſe outrageous deeds? How dares thy pride
Offer this inſult to the land, where dwell
Pelaſgian men? Or didſt thou deem that women
Alone inhabit here? Thy ſavage acts,
Barbarian, touch the dignity of Greece.
Learn thy miſtake then, and thine high offence.

HERALD.

Againſt what law, what right have I offended?

PELASGUS.

PELASGUS.

Firſt, doſt thou know thou art a ſtranger here?

HERALD.

A ſtranger here I found what I had loſt.

PELASGUS.

To whom haſt thou addreſs'd thee for protection?

HERALD.

To Mercury, who directs the ſtranger's ſearch.

PELASGUS.

The Gods! Thou haſt no reverence for the Gods.

HERALD.

Yes, for the Gods of Nile, an holy reverence.

PELASGUS.

But none for theſe, if right I underſtand thee.

HERALD.

Theſe lead I hence; and who ſhall take them from me?

PELASGUS.

PELASGUS.

Dare but to touch them, dear ſhalt thou abide it.

HERALD.

Is this your hoſpitality to ſtrangers?

PELASGUS.

I owe the ruffian none, that robs the Gods.

HERALD.

Go then, announce this to Ægyptus' ſons.

PELASGUS.

It ſuits not me; my ſoul diſdains the office.

HERALD.

Then let me ſpeak, and plainly; it becomes
An herald's office to ſpeak all things plain.
How ruffians, ſay, how robbers of the Gods,
This kindred train, that comes to claim theſe women?
Not by the voice of evidence does Mars
Decide theſe things[k]; nor for a mulct of gold
Compound

[k] Pelaſgus had before gently rebuked the herald for the impropriety of his conduct; he had landed on a foreign ſhore, and

Compound the dreadful quarrel; e'er it ends
Many ſhall ſhed their dear blood in the duſt,
Many lie low on earth, and bite the ground.

PELASGUS.

Hear then what honour prompts, what juſtice dictates,
And bear it to the partners of thy voyage.
If theſe approve, if their free will incline them,
Lead them, if gentle words win their aſſent.
This firm decree the ſuffrage of the ſtate
Has render'd ſacred, not by force to yield
A train of females; this reſolve, be ſure,
Is ſtrongly fix'd, and never can be ſhaken.
Tho' not engrav'd on tablets, nor enroll'd
In ſeal-ſtamp'd volumes, my free voice declares it

and advanced without aſking the protection of any of the natives, and without reverencing the ſanctity of the place; he rudely anſwers, I found here what I had loſt, and I will ſeize it: being commanded not to touch the virgins, he has recourſe to his ſacred office, and promiſes to explain himſelf clearly; but inſtead of this abruptly declares, that Mars decides not by evidence, and at once threatens war: this is a ſtrong mark of the impetuous and lawleſs violence of the ſons of Ægyptus. Perhaps the critical taſte of Pauw may be acknowledged in this remark.

In

In words of plaineſt import. Take thy anſwer;
Hence from my ſight, with thy beſt ſpeed be gone.

HERALD.

Know then a riſing war awaits thy choice:
Valour and conqueſt crown the helms of men.

PELASGUS.

You ſhall be met by men, whoſe lively blood
Dull draughts of barley wine have never clog'd[1].
Now virgins, with your train of faithful friends,
Diſmiſs your fears; enter this town, whoſe walls
Strong-built, and crown'd with many' a bulwark, lift
Their tow'red heads impregnable: within
The ſtate has many ſtructures; nor is mine
A thin inhabitation; ſuch an houſe,

[1] That benevolent conqueror Oſiris, whoſe military expeditions were undertaken with a view of inſtructing mankind in planting, ſowing, and the uſeful arts of civilized life, with great care introduced the vine, wherever the ſoil was adapted to its growth; where it was not, as particularly in Ægypt, he taught the inhabitants the uſe of ferment, and ſhowed them the way to make a wine of barley little inferior to the juice of the grape.—See Bryant's Analyſis, vol. ii. p. 59. This liquor Pelaſgus holds in contempt compared with the rich and generous wines of Greece.

Where

Where chearful numbers live in wealth and
ſplendor,
May haply pleaſe you: if a private manſion,
To your own uſe devote, be more your wiſh;
The beſt of theſe, the moſt approv'd, is yours;
Make your free choice: I will protect you; all
This friendly ſtate, ſupporting their decree,
Will ſhield you. What, wiſh you more pow'rful
guardians?

CHORUS.

For theſe thy bounties may the bounteous Gods
Show'r bleſſings on thy head, thou gen'rous king
Of brave Pelaſgia! But benevolent
Send us our father Danaus, on whoſe firm
And provident counſels we rely. His care
And ſage advice is needful, where to chuſe
Our dwelling, our ſecure retreat. The tongue
Of Slander is too prompt with wanton malice
To wound the ſtranger: Act we then with caution.

PELASGUS.

With honour, lovely virgins, with the voice
Of fair-applauding fame amidſt our city

Shall

Shall your appointment be, where'er your father
Aſſigns to each her manſion and attendants.

DANAUS, CHORUS.

DANAUS.

Daughters, it well becomes you to theſe Argives,
As to th' immortal Gods, to offer vows,
Libation, ſacrifice, and ev'ry rite
Religion knows; ſo liberal their protection,
So readily they lent their friendly ears,
And favour'd all my deeds againſt theſe youths,
Theſe kindred youths, whoſe headlong pride thus haunts you.
Behold theſe ſpears around, to me aſſign'd
An honorable guard, that no rude hand
With barb'rous rage may lift the ſecret ſword,
And with my blood pollute the pious land.
This grace, this condeſcenſion claims my thanks,
And you with grateful minds honour it ever.
To all the wiſe inſtructions of your father,
Grav'd in your faithful tablets, grave theſe alſo,
That after-times may hold this ſtranger train
In reverence. Know then this, The tongue of malice

Is

Is ever prompt to wound the ſtranger's fame
With ſtings of infamy: I charge you then
Diſgrace me not. I ſee your blooming age,
Inforcing ſoft deſire; I know how hard
To guard the lovely flow'rs that grace that ſeaſon.
Beaſts love to riot on their ſweets [m], and man,
Each inſect, and each wanton-winged bird.
The Queen of Love proclaims their opening bloom;
Ah, wou'd ſhe ſuffer it remain uncropt!
And on the delicate tints, that kindling glow
On beauty's vermeil cheek, each roving youth
With melting wiſhes darts the amorous glance.
We brook not this: elſe why theſe various toils,
Theſe wand'rings o'er the wide-extended main?
Let us not work this ſcandal to ourſelves,
And triumph to our foes. Two manſions here
Are offer'd to your choice; Pelaſgus one

[m] The force of love through all the animal creation is here finely deſcribed: Lucretius ſeems to have it in his eye in that exquiſitely beautiful addreſs to Venus with which he opens his poem: but the chaſte regard to decorum, which breathes through the admonition of Danaus, deſerves to be written in letters of gold.

Wou'd

Wou'd give, and one the ſtate; beneath whoſe roof
No male attendant waits: the choice is eaſy.
Only obſerve theſe precepts of your father,
And guard with heedful care your virgin honour.

CHORUS.

O may the pow'rs of Heav'n in all beſides
Be gracious to us; in our virgin honour
Have confidence: be their high wills unchang'd,
I ſhall not deviate from my mind's fix'd plan.

CHORUS.

Go then, ye pure, ye pious train,
In triumph go to thoſe bleſs'd pow'rs,
That o'er this ſtate extend their reign
Imperial guardians of theſe tow'rs;
Imperial guardians of theſe glades,
Along whoſe hallow'd ſhades
His dark'ning ſtream old Eraſinus rolls:
With courage arm your ſouls.
No more to Nile's deep floods belong
The warbled voice, the raptur'd ſong[n];

[n] As Ægypt was indebted for its fruitfulneſs to the overflowing of the Nile, the firſt riſing of its waters was marked with religious care, and welcomed with ſolemn hymns.

Our praiſe Pelaſgia's towns demand;
And each freſh fount, that loves to lead
His humid train thro' grove, thro' mead,
And rolls luxuriance thro' the land.
Virgin Diana, bend thine eye,
And piteous of a virgin's woes,
O ſave enſnared chaſtity,
From the rude touch of hated foes:
Nor ſee thy ſtruggling vot'ries led
Where Venus decks the bed!
Nor, Queen of Love, ſhall our mellifluous lays
Be ſilent in thy praiſe:
For thou, next Heav'n's imperial queen,
In higheſt grace with Jove art ſeen,
And mighty deeds declare thy pow'r:
The paſſions hear thy ſoft controul;
Thy ſweet voice melts the willing ſoul,
Enchanted with thy honied lore.

Round thee, where'er thou lead'ſt the way,
Joyful the frolic Cupids rove;
And as their antic ſports they play,
Whiſper the harmony of love.
But what have I with love or joy?
My peace wild fears annoy,

The

The miſeries of flight, purſuit's alarms,
And ſlaughter-threat'ning arms:
Why elſe the quick, the fav'ring gales
Waft o'er the waves their flying ſails?

SEMICHORUS.

This is the fix'd decree of fate [o];
And thus high Heav'n's unbounded Lord,
Pronounc'd th' irrevocable word,
And doom'd us to the nuptial ſtate.

CHORUS.

Ah, never may his ſovereign will
Me to Ægyptus' ſons unite!

SEMICHORUS.

This is to graſp at ſhadows ſtill,
And ſooth thy ſoul with vain delight.

CHORUS.

Know'ſt thou his will? Or has thine eye
Look'd thro' futurity?

[o] This is an alluſion, dark as it ought to be, to the future fortune of theſe perſecuted ladies: their ſtory is well known. The epiſtle of Hypermneſtra to Lynceus by Ovid is a fine ſupplement to this tragedy.

SEMICHORUS.

His mind I dare not ſcan, immenſe, profound:
And thou thy wiſhes bound;
'Gainſt Heav'n's high will exclaim no more,
But in mute meekneſs learn t' adore.

CHORUS.

Almighty Sire, whoſe healing hand
Sooth'd thy lov'd Iö's ſoul to reſt,
With comfort cheer this ſorrowing breaſt,
And ſave us from this hoſtile band!
For me thro' fortune's cloud hope beams her ray,
And from that bright'ning part goes bright'ning on;
So right ſucceeding right ſhall force its way,
And the good Gods complete what Greece begun.

THE SEVEN CHIEFS AGAINST THEBES.

THE

SEVEN CHIEFS

AGAINST

THEBES.

BESIDES this Siege of Thebes Æſchylus wrote three Tragedies on the ſubjects of Laius, OEdipus, and the Sphinx, which are loſt. Woe to the ravenous jaws of time, that have devoured theſe precious morſels of antiquity; we ſhould otherwiſe have had from this great maſter a regular, and, no doubt, an intereſting account of

this illuſtrious and unfortunate family. It is ſaid that Æſchylus particularly valued himſelf upon this tragedy: not without reaſon; for it has all that bold painting, with which we might expect his martial genius would embelliſh ſuch a ſubject. Always magnificent, he has fixed the ſcene in Thebes before the principal temple: the claſh of arms, the neighing of the horſes, and the ſhouts of the ſoldiers are heard: Eteocles appears ſurrounded with the citizens, whom he animates to defend the walls: in the mean time the Chorus, which is compoſed of Theban Ladies, diſtracted with their fears are hanging on the ſtatues of the Gods that adorn the area before the temple. Longinus has remarked on the ſublimity of the dialogue; it is worthy an experienced veteran and a brave young king arming in defence of his crown, his life, and his honour;

honour; it is worthy of Æſchylus. The characters of the Seven Chiefs, that command in the attack, are exquiſitely marked and varied; and their impetuous ferocity is admirably contraſted with the calm and deliberate courage of thoſe appointed to oppoſe them. The ſhields of ſix of theſe chief are charged with armorial * bearings, expreſſive of their characters, and as regular as if they had been marſhaled by an herald at arms: the impreſſes are de-

* The origin of theſe inſignià is not known, but we have here a proof of their high antiquity; they were born as marks of noble deſcent, or illuſtrious action, and as ſuch were of diſtinguiſhing honour: but ſhould they, in the ambitious meanneſs of future times (this age is too pure to admit of ſuch a proſtitution), be *aſſumed* by ſuch as are neither diſtinguiſhed by high birth nor virtuous action, by ſuch as owe their wealth to the wantonneſs of fortune, or to deeds that deſerve a different kind of elevation, they muſt neceſſarily ſuffer great *abatements of honour*, and the proud *atchievents* of virtue ſink into *common charges*.

viſed

viſed with a fine imagination and wonderful propriety.

The judicious choice of the perſons of the Chorus forms one of the principal graces of this tragedy, as it gave the poet an opportunity of mixing the natural timidity of the female character with the animated and firey daring of heroes, the fears of theſe daughters of Cadmus preſenting nothing to their imagination but the ſcenes of diſtreſs and horror, which the inſolence of conqueſt ſpreads through a vanquiſhed and plundered city, and this painted in the warmeſt colours, in the ſtrongeſt ſtyle of Æſchylus.

Beſides the intrinſic beauty of this tragedy, which is very ſtriking, it has to us this further merit, that it gave birth to three

the

the fineſt poems of antiquity, the Antigone of Sophocles, the Phœniſſæ of Euripides, and the Thebaid of Statius.

Perſons

Perſons of the Drama.

ETEOCLES.

SOLDIER.

ANTIGONE.

ISMENE.

HERALD.

CHORUS of THEBAN VIRGINS.

THE SEVEN CHIEFS AGAINST THEBES.

ETEOCLES, CHORUS.

ETEOCLES.

YE citizens of Cadmus [a], it behoves
The man that guides the helm of ſtate [b], to ſpeak
What

[a] There are ſo many alluſions in this tragedy to the hiſtory of Cadmus, that it may not be improper to lay it before the reader in one view. When Jupiter, in the form of a bull, had carried off Europa, the daughter of Agenor king of Phœnicia, the diſconſolate father ſent his ſon Cadmus in ſearch

What the ſad times require; nor ſuffer ſleep
To weigh his eyelids down. For if ſucceſs
Attends

ſearch of her, commanding him not to return unleſs he found her. Cadmus having wandered over the world in vain, conſulted the Oracle of Apollo at Delphos; the anſwer of the God was,

Behold amidſt the fields a lonely cow,
Unworn with yokes, unbroken to the plough;
Mark well the place where firſt ſhe lays her down,
There meaſure out thy walls, and build thy town.

ADDISON.

He obeyed. Some of his attendants were ſent to a river nigh the place, to bring living water for a ſacrifice which he was preparing to Jupiter; an immenſe dragon ruſhed from his cave and killed them: Cadmus, to revenge the death of his friends, fought with this dragon and ſlew him; then, by the admonition of Minerva, he ſowed the teeth of the dragon in the ground, from which an hoſt of men completely armed ſuddenly aroſe; theſe furiouſly attacked each other, till only five of the number remained alive: peace was made between them, and Cadmus aſſociated them to his train. The Thebans afterwards were proud of deriving ſome of their beſt families from this dragon race. Cadmus now built Thebes, and having eſtabliſhed his colony, married Harmonia, the daughter of Mars and Venus; all the Gods attended at the nuptials, and each honoured the bride with ſome preſent.

[b] The man that guides the helm of ſtate, ἐν πρύμνῃ πόλεως ὄιακα νωμῶν. This beautiful metaphor I believe will be found one of thoſe ſelect few, which are univerſal in all the poliſhed languages of civilized nations; our author uſes it again v. 62, and v. 658 of this play; and his contemporary, Pindar,

in

Attends our toils, to the good Gods we bow[c],
The authors of the bleſſing: Shou'd misfortune,
Avert it Heav'n! befall, Eteocles
Shall hear his name alone wide thro' the city
Inſulted by each tongue, that vents its ſpleen
In mutinous reproach, or loud laments:
From which may Jove, the guardian of our ſtate,
Defend the ſons of Cadmus! But this hour
Calls on you all, whether your flow'ry ſpring
Yet wants the prime of manhood, or your age
Puts forth its firmeſt ſtrength, t' exert your pow'rs,
Well it becomes you, to defend the city,
The altars of the Gods preſiding here,
(Ah, never may their honours be effac'd!)

in his firſt Pythian Ode, v. 159, and indeed almoſt every author in proſe or poetry ſince that period: Horace even addreſſes the republic itſelf under the character of a ſhip; and Cicero, in his oration pro domo ſuâ, ſays, In illis tenebris reipublicæ cæciſque nubibus et procellis, quum ſenatum a gubernaculis dejeciſſes, populum e navi exturbaſſes, ipſe archipirata cum grege prædonum impuriſſimo pleniſſimis velis navigares.——R. P. Jodrell.

[c] The piety of the ancients in aſcribing their ſucceſs to the Gods was conſpicuous and uniform: hence the χαριστήρια of the Greeks, and the grates of the Latins were preſents to their gods to teſtify their gratitude for the divine aſſiſtance.—STANLEY.

Your

Your children, and this land, your common parent,
And deareſt nurſe, who on her foſt'ring ſoil
Upheld with bounteous care your infant ſteps,
And train'd you to this ſervice, that your hands
In her defence might lift the faithful ſhield.
E'en to this day indeed the Gods incline
To favour us; and tho' ſo long immur'd
Within our rampires, each bold work of war
Hath proſper'd in our hands. But now the ſeer,
That liſtens to the flight of birds [d], and thence
Forms in his præſcient mind the ſure preſage,
Guiltleſs of fire, from their oracular wings
Draws his deep ſkill, and warns us that the pow'rs
Of Greece, combin'd againſt us, in the night
Advancing, meditate the dark aſſault.
Haſte all then to the walls, haſte to the bulwarks
With all your arms, fill ev'ry tow'r, ſecure

[d] Apollodorus tells us that Minerva had given Tireſias, as a compenſation for his loſs of ſight, which ſhe could not reſtore, the faculty of underſtanding the voices of all birds: hence his prophecies were taken from auguries only; ſo that the inſpection of the entrails placed on the altar, the mounting of the ſmoke and the flame, and all the omens to which fire was neceſſary, were out of his department.

Each

Each paſs, ſtand firm at ev'ry gate, be bold,
Nor fear th' aſſailing numbers: Heav'n is with us.
Meanwhile on ev'ry quarter have I ſent
T' obſerve their forces, and deſcry their march:
By theſe, not charg'd, I truſt, in vain to watch,
Inform'd I guard againſt the wiles of war.

SOLDIER, ETEOCLES, CHORUS.

SOLDIER.

Illuſtrious king of Thebes, I bring thee tidings
Of firm aſſurance from the foe; theſe eyes
Beheld each circumſtance. Seven valiant chiefs
Slew on the black-orb'd ſhield the victim bull [c],

[c] Longinus has ſelected this paſſage as an inſtance of the bold and heroic genius of Æſchylus. The ſublimity here ariſes from the aſſemblage of the images; the bull ſlain on the black-orbed ſhield, ſhows it to be a ſacrifice to Pluto, and a ſolemn devotion of themſelves; the dipping of their hands in the blood, the invocation of Mars, Bellona, and Terror, their ſhedding tears but without any ſign of remorſe, and their ſouls of iron glowing with valour, with the ſimile of the lion glaring determined battle, are greatly conceived, and together breathe a ſolemn and terrible magnificence.

Mr. Jodrell obſerves, that the beauty of this paſſage has not ſecured it from the ſatirical laſh of Ariſtophanes, whoſe Lyſiſtrata, tendering the oath to her female confederates, propoſes to imitate Æſchylus by ſlaying a ſheep over a ſhield, v. 189.

And dipping in the gore their furious hands,
In ſolemn oath atteſt the God of war,
Bellona, and the carnage-loving pow'r
Of terror [f] ſworn from their firm baſe to rend

[f] Terror had before been perſonified by Homer as the ſon of Mars,

Οἷος δὲ Φρίκολοιγὸς Ἄρης πόλεμον δὲ μέτεισι,
Τῷ δὲ Φόβος φίλος υἱὸς ἅμα κρατερὸς καὶ ἀταρβὴς
Ἔσπετο, ὅστ' ἐφόβησε καὶ ἀλκάφρονα περ πολεμιστήν.
Il. 13. v. 198.

Terror, his beſt lov'd ſon, attends his courſe,
Arm'd with ſtern boldneſs, and enormous force;
The pride of haughty warriors to confound,
And lay the ſtrength of tyrants on the ground.—POPE.

Virgil has imitated this paſſage, as far as the imperfection of the Latin language would permit,

circumque atræ formidinis ora,
Iræque, inſidiæque, dei comitatus aguntur.
Æn. 12. v. 336.

Wrath, terror, treaſon, tumult, and deſpair,
Dire faces and deform'd, ſurround the car,
Friends of the god, and followers of the war.——
DRYDEN.

I mean that the beauty of the proſopopœia, or perſonification, is here conſiderably diminiſhed by Formido, Iræ, and Inſidiæ, being of the feminine gender, inſtead of maſculine, as Φόβος, or as terror may be made in Engliſh.—R. P. JODRELL.

Theſe

Theſe walls, and lay their ramparts in the duſt;
Or, dying, with their warm blood ſteep this earth.
Each in Adraſtus' car ſome dear remembrance [g]
Piled to their diſtant parents, whilſt their eyes
Drop'd tears, but on their face was no remorſe.
Each ſoul of iron glowing with the rage
Of valour, as the lion when he glares
Determin'd battle. What I now relate
Sleeps not, nor lingers: round the urn I left them,
By lot deciding to what gate each chief
Shall lead his forces. Theſe againſt ſelect
The beſt, the braveſt of the ſons of Thebes,
And inſtant at the gates aſſign their ſtations.
For all in arms the Argive hoſt comes on
Involv'd in duſt, and from the ſnorting ſteeds
The thick foam falls, and dews the whiten'd fields.
Be thine the provident pilot's gen'rous care,
Guard well the town, e'er yet the ſtorm aſſails it;

[g] It was the cuſtom of the ancients before a battle, in which they apprehended danger, to ſend home to their friends ſome pledges as remembrances, things of little value in themſelves, but rendered dear by the circumſtance: theſe are placed in the chariot of Adraſtus, becauſe Amphiaraus had declared, that he alone of the confederate chiefs ſhould return to Argos.

E'en now the waves of war roar o'er the plain [h]:
Seize then this fair occaſion, inſtant ſeize it.
My faithful eye this day ſhall hold the watch,
That well inform'd, no danger may ſurprize thee.

ETEOCLES.

O Jove, O Earth, O all ye guardian Gods;
And thou dread curſe, the fury of my father,
Of fatal pow'r, O rend not from its roots
This ruin'd city by th' inſulting foe
Trampled in duſt, her ſweet Helladian tongue
Silent, and all her ſacred fires extinct!
Ah, never let this land, this town of Cadmus
Bend her free neck beneath the ſervile yoke!
Protect her, ſave her; as you ſhare her honours
I plead: A flouriſhing ſtate reveres the Gods.

CHORUS.

Woe, woe, intolerable woe!
Fierce from their camps the hoſts advance,

[h] Æſchylus is diſtinguiſhed for bold and glowing metaphors: Nothing can be more picturesque, animated, or more philoſophically exact than the preſent expreſſion, which calls an army approaching, a land-wave advancing with a roaring noiſe: the ſame metaphor occurs afterwards, v. 116. of this play.—R. P. JODRELL.

Before

Before their march with thund'ring tread
Proud o'er the plain their firey courſers prance,
And hither bend their footſteps dread:
Yon' cloud of duſt that choaks the air,
A true tho' tongueleſs meſſenger,
Marks plain the progreſs of the foe.
And now the horrid claſh of arms,
That, like the torrent, whoſe impetuous tide
Roars down the mountain's craggy ſide,
Shook the wide fields with fierce alarms,
With nearer terrors ſtrikes our ſouls,
And thro' our chaſte receſſes rolls:
Hear, all ye pow'rs of Heav'n, propitious hear,
And check the furies of this threat'ning war!

The crouded walls around
Loud clamours rend the ſky;
Whilſt rang'd in deep array th' embattled pow'rs
Their ſilver ſhields [1] lift high,
And,

[1] Stanley rightly obſerves, that the common ſoldiers bore white or plain ſhields, but the generals had devices on theirs. Therefore Euripides (Phæniſſ. v. 116.) calls the Argive army λευκάσπις: and Virgil, ſpeaking of Helenor, who was born of a ſlave, and conſequently ignoble, ſays, parmâ inglorius albâ. Æn. 9.

And, level with the ground
To lay their rampir'd heads, aſſail our tow'rs.
What guardian God ſhall I implore?
Bending at what ſacred ſhrine
Call from their happy ſeats what pow'rs divine,
And ſuppliant ev'ry ſculptur'd form adore?
The time demands it: why then, why delay?—
The ſound of arms ſwells on my' affrighted ear.—
Hold now the pall, the garland [k], as you pray.—
Hark! 'tis the rude claſh of no ſingle ſpear.

Slight were his arms, a ſword and ſilver ſhield,
No marks of honour charg'd its empty field.—DRYDEN.

R. P. JODRELL.

[k] In great diſtreſſes it was cuſtomary for the nobleſt dames to go in proceſſion to the temples, carrying in their hands rich robes and crowns, with which they adorned the images of the tutelary gods, whoſe protection they implored: thus Virgil deſcribes the Trojan dames,

Interea ad templum non æquæ Palladis ibant
Crinibus Iliades paſſis, peplumque ferebant
Suppliciter triſtes.—— Æn. 1. v. 483.

Mean time the Trojan dames, oppreſs'd with woe,
To Pallas fane in long proceſſion go:—
They weep, they beat their breaſts, they rend their hair,
And rich embroider'd veſts for preſents bear.—DRYDEN.

This is taken from the ſixth Iliad, where the augur Helenus aſſigns this office to his mother Hecuba.

Stern

Stern God of war,
Doſt thou prepare
Thy ſacred city to betray?
Look down, look down[l];
O ſave thine own;
Nor leave us to the foe a prey:
If e'er thy ſoul had pleaſure in the brave,
God of the golden helm, hear us, and ſave!

And all ye pow'rs, whoſe guardian care[m]
Protects theſe walls, this favour'd land,
O hear theſe pious, ſuppliant ſtrains;
Propitious aid us, aid a virgin band,
And ſave us from the victor's chains!
For all around with creſted pride
High waves the helm's terrific tide,
Toſt by the furious breath of war.

[l] Ἐπιὰ, ἐπιὰ.—The frequent repetitions of the ſame word in this Chorus are extremely natural, and the language of fear in women trembling at the approach of the enemy.—R. P. JODRELL.

[m] The Gods here addreſſed, θεοὶ πολισσοῦχοι χθονὸς, were thoſe before whoſe images the Chorus now ſtood. Mars and Venus are invoked with peculiar propriety, as the parents of Harmonia, and ſo the great progenitors of the Cadmeian line.

And thou, great Jove, almighty ſire,
Confound with foul defeat theſe Argive pow'rs,
Whoſe arms inſult our leaguer'd tow'rs,
And fright our ſouls with hoſtile fire.
The reins that curb their proud ſteeds 'round,
Rattle, and death is in the ſound:
'Gainſt our ſev'n gates ſev'n chiefs of high command,

In arms ſpear-proof, take their appointed ſtand,
Daughter of Jove, whoſe ſoul
Glows at th' embattled plain;
And thou, by whom the pawing ſteed aroſe[n],

[n] Neptune acquired the title of ἵππιος from being the creator of the horſe, according to the fabulous mythology, and is thus invoked by Virgil in the opening of his Georgicks,

Tuque O cui prima frementem
Fudit equum magno tellus percuſſa tridente
Neptune.

And thou, whoſe trident, ſtruck the teeming earth,
And made a paſſage for the courſer's birth.—DRYDEN.

The ſtory was, that he and Minerva both claimed the honour of giving their name to Athens: Jupiter decreed, that whoever produced the moſt uſeful preſent to mankind ſhould have the preference. Neptune ſtruck the earth with his trident, and gave exiſtence to this animal; Minerva with her ſpear raiſed the olive tree, and conquered.—R. P. JODRELL.

Great

Great monarch of the main
Curb'd by thy ſtrong controul;
From our fears free us, free us from our foes!
On thee, ſtern Mars, again I call:
Haſte thee, God, and with thee bring
The Queen of Love, from whoſe high race we ſpring;
If Cadmus e'er was dear, defend his wall!
Thou terror of the ſavage Phœbus, hear,
In all thy terrors ruſh upon the foe!
Chaſte Virgin-huntreſs, Goddeſs ever dear,
Wing the keen arrow from thy ready bow!
Hark! fraught with war
The groaning car,
Imperial Juno! ſhakes the ground;
Fierce as they paſs,
The wheels of braſs,
Dear Virgin-huntreſs! roar around:
The gleaming luſtre of the brandiſh'd ſpear
Glares terribly acroſs the troubled air*.

* The fire of expreſſion in Æſchylus is often incapable of a literal tranſlation. Here the whole atmoſphere convulſed with the agitation of ſpears is ſaid to be inflamed to madneſs. R. P. JODRELL.

Alas

Alas my country! muſt theſe eyes,
Muſt theſe ſad eyes behold thy fall?
Ah, what a ſtorm of ſtones, that flies,
And wing'd with ruin ſmites the wall!
O Phœbus! at each crouded gate
Begins the dreadful work of fate;
Each arm the thund'ring falchion wields,
And claſhes on the ſounding ſhields.
O thou, whoſe kind and matchleſs might,
Bleſt Onca, thro' the glowing fight
Obedient conqueſt joys t' attend,
All our ſev'n gates, dread queen, defend!
And all ye mighty, guardian pow'rs,
That here preſide, protect our tow'rs:
Nor the war-waſted town betray,
To fierce and diſſonant foes a prey!
Ye Gods, deliverers of this land,
To whom we ſtretch the ſuppliant hand,
Hear us, O hear our virgin pray'r,
And ſhow that Thebes is yet your care!
By ev'ry ſolemn temple, ev'ry ſhrine,
Each hallow'd orgie, and each rite divine,
Each honour to your pow'r in rev'rence paid,
Hear us, ye guardian Gods, hear us, and aid!

ETEOCLES.

ETEOCLES, CHORUS.

ETEOCLES.

It is not to be borne, ye wayward race[p]:
Is this your beſt, is this the aid you lend
The ſtate, the fortitude with which you ſteel
The ſouls of the beſieg'd, thus falling down
Before theſe images to wail, and ſhriek
With lamentations loud? Wiſdom abhors you.
Nor in misfortune, nor in dear ſucceſs,
Be woman my aſſociate: if her pow'r
Bears ſway, her inſolence exceeds all bounds;
But if ſhe fears, woe to that houſe and city.
And now, by holding counſel with weak fear,

[p] Eteocles, with reaſon, offended at the intimidating cries of theſe females, treats them with great harſhneſs; his reflections are ſo uncourtly, that they might well ſay afterwards, "thou ſcorneſt our ſex:" but certainly they were out of their province: even the fond and gentle Hector ſays to the amiable Andromache,

No more:—but haſten to thy taſks at home,
There guide the ſpindle, and direct the loom:
Me glory ſummons to the martial ſcene,
The field of combat is the ſphere for men.

Il. 6. Pope.

You

You magnify the foe, and turn our men
To flight: thus are we ruin'd by ourſelves.
This ever will ariſe from ſuffering women
To intermix with men. But mark me well,
Whoe'er henceforth dares diſobey my orders,
Be it or man or woman, old or young,
Vengeance ſhall burſt upon him, the decree
Stands irreverſible, and he ſhall die.
War is no female province, but the ſcene
For men: hence, home; nor ſpread your miſchiefs here.
Hear you, or not? Or ſpeak I to the deaf?

CHORUS.

Dear to thy country, ſon of Œdipus,
My ſoul was ſeiz'd with terror, when I heard
The rapid car roll on, its whirling wheels
Grating harſh thunder; and the iron curb
Inceſſant claſhing on the barbed ſteed.

ETEOCLES.

What! ſhou'd the pilot, when the lab'ring bark [q]
Scarce

[q] Stanley has with much learning and judgment proved, againſt Heinſius, Scaliger, Grotius, and Bochart, that the images

Scarce rides the ſwelling ſurge, forſake the helm,
And ſeek his ſafety from the ſculptur'd prow?

CHORUS.

Yet therefore to theſe ancient images,
Confiding in their ſacred pow'r, I ran,
When at the gates ſharp ſleet of arrowy ſhow'r
Drove hard; my fears impell'd me to implore
The bleſt Gods to protect the city's ſtrength[r].

ETEOCLES.

images of the tutelary gods were anciently affixed to the prows of ſhips. The alluſion is finely conceived, and expreſſed with great ſtrength and proper conciſeneſs.

[r] The ſcholiaſt tells us, that the Trojans, when their city was ſtormed, ſaw the gods carrying away their images; this he takes from a tragedy of Sophocles on that ſubject, which is loſt. There is a ſimilar inſtance in the Troades of Euripides; hence Virgil,

> Exceſſere omnes adytis ariſque relictis
> Dii, quibus imperium hoc ſteterat.— Æn. 2.
>
> You ſee our hopeleſs ſtate; how every god,
> Who guarded Troy, has left his old abode.—PITT.

The Romans were ſo ſtrongly impreſſed with this idea, that when they beſieged a town they anxiouſly inquired the name of the tutelary god, whom they evoked with much ſolemnity. The reaſon aſſigned for this deſertion was, that amidſt ſuch ſcenes of devaſtation and carnage the reverence and honours due to the gods muſt be neglected; this ſhows the propriety of Eteocles' addreſs before,

Protect

ETEOCLES.

Pray that our tow'rs repel the hoſtile ſpear. [t]

CHORUS.

This ſhall the Gods——

ETEOCLES.

The Gods, they ſay prepare
To quit their ſeats, and leave a vanquiſh'd town.

CHORUS.

Protect her, ſave her, as you ſhare her honours
I plead: a flouriſhing ſtate reveres the Gods.

The learned Mr. Jodrell obſerves here, that Jeruſalem, when ſacked, was ſaid to have been forſaken of its Gods; and that the Shekinah, or divine preſence, was undoubtedly withdrawn from the ark of the firſt temple, before it was deſtroyed by the king of Babylon. He adds, that Tarquin, before he dedicated the temple to Jupiter Capitolinus, performed the ceremony of unhallowing the ground from all other religious inſtitutions, ut area eſſet tota Jovis. Liv. l. 1. c. 55. He further ſays, that this idea and veneration of local divinity was by ſome people carried to ſuch an exceſs of extravagant folly, that they uſed to bind their favourite gods in their temples to prevent ſuch deſertion; which cuſtom ſome Chriſtian writers, whoſe god is not to be confined with mortal fetters, object with great indignation againſt the Gentiles. He refers us to Arnob. cont. Gent. l. 6.—to Cyprian. ad Demetr. p. 191. Ed. Fell.—Petr. c. 89. p. 435. Ed. Burm. and to Diodor. Sic. l. 17.—Q. Curtius, l. 4. c. 3.

[t] Thus Sophocles, Τέκνα, γυναιξὶ κόσμος ἡ σιγὴ φέρει. Ajax. v. 293. This line is quoted to introduce an anecdote, which deſerves

CHORUS.

Ah, never, whilſt I breath the vital air,
May their bleſt train forſake us; nor theſe eyes
Behold deſtruction raging thro' our ſtreets,
And in fierce flames our ſtately ſtructures blaze!

ETEOCLES.

Let not theſe invocations of the Gods
Make you improvident; remember rather
Obedience is the mother of ſucceſs,
Wedded to ſafety: ſo the wiſe aſſure us.

CHORUS.

Yet in the Gods is a ſuperior pow'r,
Which often in afflictions clears away

deſerves to be mentioned. When a learned German paid a viſit to the accompliſhed and modeſt M. Dacier, he requeſted her to inſcribe her name and a ſentence in his travelling book, or album, according to the arrogant cuſtom of his country, among the names of the moſt eminent ſcholars in Europe: ſhe at firſt refuſed, but was at laſt prevailed upon, and wrote this celebrated verſe of Sophocles, which Dr. Franklin well tranſlates thus,

Woman, thy ſex's nobleſt ornament
Is ſilence.——— R. P. JODRELL.

Th' im-

Th' impenetrable cloud, whoſe ſullen gloom
Sharp miſery hung before our darken'd eyes.

ETEOCLES.

The victim, and the hallow'd ſacrifice,
When the foes menace, are the taſk of men;
Thine, to be ſilent, and remain at home.

CHORUS.

That we poſſeſs our city yet unconquer'd,
That yet our tow'rs repel th' aſſailing foe,
Is from the Gods: from them our voice calls down
Further ſucceſs: Why ſhou'd this move thy anger?

ETEOCLES.

It does not, virgin: No: your pious vows
I blame not. But be ſilent; leſt thy fears,
Swelling to this exceſs, diſmay our youth.

CHORUS.

Affrighted at the ſudden din of war,
And trembling with my fears, with haſty foot
I ſought this citadel, this ſacred ſeat.

ETEOCLES.

If haply now your eyes behold the dead,
Or wounded; burſt not forth in loud laments:
For blood and carnage is the food of war.

CHORUS.

Diſtinct I hear the firey-neighing ſteed.

ETEOCLES.

Whate'er thou hear'ſt, it aſks not thy attention.

CHORUS.

The city ſhakes beneath th' encloſing foes.

ETEOCLES.

Be ſatisfied; to guard it is my charge.

CHORUS.

I fear: the claſh is louder at the gates.

ETEOCLES.

Peace; nor diſtract the city with thy cries.

CHORUS.

Ye ſocial pow'rs, leave not our walls defenceleſs.

ETEOCLES.

Woe on thee! Canſt thou not bear this in ſilence?

CHORUS.

Gods of this ſtate, ſave me from ſlavery!

ETEOCLES.

Me wou'dſt thou make a ſlave, and all the ſtate.

CHORUS.

All-pow'rful Jove, turn on the foe the ſword!

ETEOCLES.

Heav'ns, of what quality are women form'd?

CHORUS.

Wretched, as men are, in their country's ruin.

ETEOCLES.

Still wail thy country? Still embrace theſe Gods?

CHORUS.

Wild with my fears, I ſpeak I know not what.

ETEOCLES.

Wou'dſt thou indulge me in a light requeſt?

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Speak it at once, quickly ſhall I obey.

ETEOCLES.

Be ſilent, wretch; nor terrify thy friends.

CHORUS.

I will; and with them bear what Fate decrees.

ETEOCLES.

I praiſe thy reſolution. Claſp no more
Theſe images; but ſtand apart, and aſk
Happier events; entreat the friendly Gods
To aid us. Hear my vows; then inſtant raiſe
The heav'n-appeaſing Pæan, whoſe high ſtrains
Of ſolemn import, 'midſt her ſacred rites,
Greece pours ſymphonious; ſtrains, that raiſe the ſoul
To gen'rous courage, and the fix'd diſdain
Of fear and danger. To the guardian Gods
Whoſe tutelary pow'r protects our fields,
Protects our crouded ſtreets; to Dirce's fount;
Nor thee, Iſmenus, will I paſs unhonour'd;
If conqueſt crowns our helms, and ſaves our city,

The hallow'd ſacrifice ſhall bleed, and load
Their ſmoking altars; this victorious hand
Shall raiſe the glitt'ring trophies[1], and hang high,
To grace their ſacred walls, the rich-wrought veſts,
Spoils of the war, rent from the bleeding foe.
Breath to the Gods theſe vows: but let no ſigh
Break forth, no lamentation rude and vain:
Weak is their pow'r to ſave thee from thy fate.
My charge ſhall be at our ſev'n gates to fix
Six of our braveſt youth, myſelf the ſeventh,
In dreadful oppoſition to the foe;
E'er yet the violent and tumultuous cry
Calls me perforce to join the firey conflict.

CHORUS.

I. 1.

I wou'd obey thee; but my breaſt
Yet pants with fear, and knows not reſt:

[1] It was a cuſtom derived from early antiquity to erect trophies to the Gods, of the arms of the conquered, in the place where the victory was obtained; hence their Ζεὺς τρόπαιος and τροπαιοῦχος. The veſts ſtript from the ſlain were hung up in the temples. This diſtinction could not eſcape the ſagacity of Pauw.

Too

Too near my heart diſtracting care
Wakes all the horrors of deſpair:
And as the trembling dove, whoſe fears
  Keep watch in her uneaſy bow'r,
Thinks in each ruſtling leaf ſhe hears
  The ſerpent gliding to devour,
I tremble at each ſullen ſound
Of claſhing arms, that roars around:
With all their troops, with all their pow'rs,
Fierce they advance to ſtorm our tow'rs;
Now hurtling in the darken'd ſky,
  What does my cruel fate prepare!
Rude, batt'ring ſtones inceſſant fly,
  And all the miſſive ſtorm of war.

I. 2.

Guard, ye great Gods, O guard our wall,
Nor let the tow'rs of Cadmus fall!
Ah, to what fairer, richer plain
Your radiant preſence will you deign,
Theſe fields abandon'd to the foes,
  Thro' whoſe criſp'd ſhades and ſmiling
    meads,
Jocundly warbling as ſhe goes,
  Dirce her liquid treaſures leads,

And boaſts that Tethys never gave,
Nor all her nymphs, a purer wave!
Deign then, ye Gods that guard this land,
Here deign to take your hallow'd ſtand:
Aſſert your glory: on the foe
Pour rout, and havoc, and diſmay,
Confuſion wild, ſoul-with'ring woe,
And flight, that flings his arms away.

I. 3.

Hear then the mournful, ſolemn ſtrain:
For dreadful were its fate, ſhou'd this ſtrong wall,
This ancient, rampir'd city, fall,
And ſpread its light duſt o'er th' encumber'd plain,
Beneath the proud Achaian ſpear,
Diſhonour'd, ſunk, the waſte of war.
Shou'd the freſh virgin's bloom, the matron's age,
By the fierce victor's firey rage,
Their robes all rent, their bleeding boſoms bare,
Be drag'd by their looſe-flowing hair,
Like horſes, a reluctant prize;
The deſolated ſtreets re-echoing to their cries.

II. 1. Before

II. 1.

Before my ſad preſaging ſoul
What ſcenes of imag'd horror roll!
I ſee the tender virgin's woe,
E'er yet her ripen'd beauties glow;
The hateful way I ſee her tread,
Forcibly torn from her ſweet home:
Happier, far happier are the dead;
They reſt within the ſilent tomb.
But, the walls humbled to the ground,
What dreadful mis'ries rage around!
Furious one leads the vengeful bands;
One ſtains with blood his reeking hands;
Wide roll, outrageous to deſtroy,
The duſky ſmoke, and torrent fires;
Whilſt ſlaught'ring Mars with hideous joy
The heav'n-contemning rage inſpires.

II. 2.

From houſe to houſe, from ſtreet to ſtreet[u],
The craſhing flames roar round, and meet;

[u] The tranſlator makes no apology for adopting the interpretation of Pauw. Periti ſciunt.

Each way the firey deluge preys,
And girds us with the circling blaze.
The brave, that 'midſt theſe dire alarms
For their loſt country greatly dare,
And fir'd with vengeance ruſh to arms,
Fall victims to the blood-ſtain'd ſpear [x].
The bleeding babe, with innocent cries,
Drops from his mother's breaſt, and dies.
See rapine ruſhes, bent on prey,
His haſty ſtep brooks no delay.
The ſpoiler, loaded with his ſtore,
Envious the loaded ſpoiler views;
Diſdains another ſhou'd have more,
And his inſatiate toil renews.

[x] This is a moſt beautiful and pictureſque image: among the horrors of a captive city, which are here ſo finely painted, it was extremely natural for women to deſcribe infants at the breaſt ſhrieking with affright; hence Virgil ſeems to have borrowed a very pathetic idea,

Et trepidæ matres preſſere ad pectora natos.
Æn. 7. v. 518.

Pale at the piercing call, the mothers preſt
With ſhrieks their ſtarting infants to the breaſt.—PITT.

See alſo Apollonius Rhodius, l. 4. v. 136.—R. P. JODRELL.

II. 3.

Thick on the earth the rich ſpoil lies[y]:
For the rude plunderers' reſtleſs-rolling tide,
Their worthleſs numbers waving wide,
Drop in their wild haſte many' a glitt'ring prize.
Whilſt, in her chaſte apartment bred,
The trembling virgin captive led,
Pours, in the anguiſh of her ſoul, the tear:
And, torn from all her heart holds dear,
The youthful bride, a novice yet in woe,
Obeys the haughty, happy foe.
But e'er ſuch horrors blaſt my ſight,
May theſe ſad eyes cloſe in eternal night[z]!

SEMICHORUS.

See, from his watch the veteran returns,
Bearing, I ween, freſh tidings from yon' hoſt,
Of higheſt import: quick his foot, and haſty.

[y] This paſſage in the original has an obſcurity on which the annotators have not vouchſafed to caſt one gleam of light: Mr. Heath's interpretation of κατὰ is beneath the dignity of the occaſion. The tranſlator can hardly flatter himſelf that he has hit on the preciſe idea of his author, but he has not wilfully deviated from the original.

[z] We are indebted to Pauw for this elucidation.

SEMI-

SEMICHORUS.

This way, behold, the ſon of Œdipus,
The king himſelf advances, preſſing on
His hurried ſtep to learn their new-form'd
meaſures.

ETEOCLES, SOLDIER, CHORUS.

SOLDIER.

Now I can tell thee, for I know it well,
The diſpoſition of the foe, and how
Each at our gates takes his allotted poſt.
Already near the Prætian gate in arms
Stands Tydeus raging; for the prophet's voice
Forbids his foot to paſs Iſmenus' ſtream,
The victims not propitious: at the paſs
Furious, and eager for the fight, the chief,
Fierce as the dragon when the mid-day ſun [a]
Calls forth his glowing terrors, raves aloud,
Reviles

[a] The whole deſcription of Tydeus is in the boldeſt ſtyle and ſtrongeſt colouring of Æſchylus. The ſerpent lying in a torpid ſtate during the winter, is ſuppoſed to have his rage increaſed by heat; hence this glowing deſcription of him by Virgil,

Poſquam

Reviles the ſage, as forming tim'rous league
With war and fate. Frowning he ſpeaks, and ſhakes

Poſtquam exhauſta palus, terræque ardore dehiſcunt,
Exilit in ſiccum, et flammantia lumina torquens
Sævit agris, aſperque ſiti, atque exterritus æſtu.

Georg. 3. v. 432.

But when in muddy pools the water ſinks,
And the chopt earth is furrow'd o'er with chinks;
He leaves the fens, and leaps upon the ground,
And hiſſing rowls his glaring eyes around:
With thirſt inflamed, impatient of the heats,
He rages in the fields, and wide deſtruction threats.

DRYDEN.

Ovid has with peculiar judgment ſeized this idea, and carried it to the north pole.

Quæque polo poſita eſt glaciali proxima ſerpens,
Frigore pigra prius, neque formidabilis ulli,
Incaluit, ſumpſitque novas feryoribus iras.

Met. l. 2. v. 173.

The folded ſerpent next the frozen pole,
Stiff and benumb'd before, began to roll,
And raged with inward heat, and threaten'd war,
And ſhot a redder light from every ſtar. - ADDISON.

Statius could not omit this circumſtance, though his immenſe dragon was a very quiet animal;

Sævior anfractu laterum ſinuoſa retorquens
Terga ſolo, ſiccique nocens furit igne veneni.

Theb. l. 5.

The

The dark creſt ſtreaming o'er his ſhaded helm
In triple wave; whilſt dreadful ring around
The brazen boſſes of his ſhield, impreſs'd
With this proud argument. A ſable ſky
Burning with ſtars; and in the midſt full-orb'd
A ſilver moon, the eye of night, o'er all
Aweful in beauty pours her peerleſs light.
Clad in theſe proud habiliments, he ſtands
Cloſe to the river's margin, and with ſhouts
Demands the war, like an impatient ſteed,
That pants upon the foaming curb, and waits
With firey expectation the known ſignal,
Swift at the trumpet's ſound to burſt away.
Before the Prætian gate, its bars remov'd,
What equal chief wilt thou appoint againſt him?

ETEOCLES.

This military pride, it moves not me:
The gorgeous blazonry of arms, the creſt
High waving o'er the helm, the roaring boſs,
Harmleſs without the ſpear, imprint no wound.
The ſable night, ſpangled with golden ſtars,
On his proud ſhield impreſs'd, perchance may prove

A gloomy

A gloomy preſage. Shou'd the ſhades of night
Fall on his dying eyes, the boaſtful charge
May to the bearer be deem'd ominous,
And he the prophet of his own deſtruction.
Againſt his rage the ſon of Aſtacus,
That breathes deliberate valour, at that gate
Will I appoint commander; bent on deeds
Of glory, but a votary at the ſhrine
Of modeſty, he ſcorns the arrogant vaunt
As baſe, but bids brave actions ſpeak his worth.
The flow'r of that bold ſtem, which from the ground [b]
Roſe arm'd, and fell not in the deathful fight,
Is Menalippus; him his parent earth
Claims as her own, and in her natural right
Calls him to guard her from the hoſtile ſpear:
But the brave deed the die of war decides.

[b] As Menalippus here and Megareus were of the dragon-race, that ſprung armed from the earth, there is a peculiar propriety in calling them forth to defend that earth, and repay that nouriture ſhe gave them.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Go then, my guardian hero, go;
And may each fav'ring God with bright ſucceſs
Thy gen'rous valour bleſs:
For at thy country's dear command
Thou arm'ſt thy righteous hand,
To pour her vengeance on the foe.
Yet my ſad heart muſt ſigh,
When on the blood-empurpled ground,
Gored with many a gaping wound,
I ſee my deareſt friends expiring lie.

SOLDIER.

May the Gods crown his valiant toil with conqueſt.
But Capaneus againſt th' Electran gates
Takes his allotted poſt, and tow'ring ſtands
Vaſt as the earth-born giants, and inflam'd
To more than mortal daring: horribly
He menaces the walls; may Heav'n avert
His impious rage! vaunts that, the Gods aſſenting
Or not aſſenting, his ſtrong hand ſhall rend

Their

Their rampires down; that e'en the rage of Jove
Deſcending on the field ſhou'd not reſtrain him.
His lightnings, and his thunders wing'd with fire
He likens to the ſun's meridian heat.
On his proud ſhield pourtray'd A naked man
Waves in his hand a blazing torch[c]; beneath
In golden letters, I WILL FIRE THE CITY.
Againſt this man—But who ſhall dare t' engage
His might, and dauntleſs his proud rage ſuſtain?

ETEOCLES.

Advantage from advantage here ariſes.

[c] Stanley allows that this inſigne may be ſuppoſed to allude to an ancient cuſtom in uſe before the invention of trumpets, where the torch-bearer, ſacred to Mars, by ſtepping into the middle ſpace between the two armies, uſed to brandiſh it as a ſignal for the onſet. The man being naked marks the contempt with which Capaneus treated the enemy, and implies that he needed no arms to attack and fire the city.—R. P. JODRELL.

Theſe obſervations are in the genuine ſpirit of criticiſm, and ſhow great penetration and judgment: Euripides could give this torch-bearer the name of Prometheus only as a metonymy; and from this cuſtom aroſe that bold metaphor which we ſhall find in the Perſians, Σάλπιγξ αὐλὴ ἐπέφλεγεν, and the Martemque accendere cantu of Virgil.

The

The arrogant vaunts, which man's vain tongue throws out,
Shall on himſelf recoil. This haughty chief
Threats high, and prompt to execute his threats
Spurns at the Gods, opes his unhallow'd lips
In ſhallow exultations, hurls on high,
Weak mortal as he is, 'gainſt Jove himſelf
Hurls his extravagant and wild defiance.
On him, I truſt, the thunder wing'd with fire[d],
Far other than the ſun's meridian heat,
Shall roll its vengeance. But againſt his pride,
Inſolent vaunter, ſhall the glowing ſpirit,
That burns for glory in the daring breaſt
Of Polyphontes, be oppos'd: his arm,
Strong in Diana's tutelary aid,

[d] There is a noble ſpirit of religious confidence in this aſſertion; it deſerves to be mentioned, that this impious boaſter periſhed by that lightning which he thus defied.—R. P. JODRELL.

The learned reader will find a bold and ſpirited narrative of the daring actions of this hero, and his death, at the end of the tenth book of the Thebaid of Statius, a writer whoſe firey genius ſometimes overleaped judgment, but who compenſates for this with

Thoughts that breath, and words that burn.

Shall

Shall be a ſure defence. But to thy tale;
Who next before our gates aſſumes his ſtation?

CHORUS.

Yes, let him periſh, the proud foe,
That ſtorms, in ſavage hope, the vanquiſh'd town,
And rends its rampires down.
Him firſt may Heav'n's almighty ſire,
Rolling his vengeful fire,
Daſh in the flaming ruin low;
E'er his impetuous ſpear
Burſts ev'ry bar of my retreat,
And from my virgin ſeat
Drags me perforce from all my ſoul holds dear.

SOLDIER.

Third from the brazen helm leap'd forth the lot
Of fierce Eteoclus, who takes his poſt
Againſt the gates of Neis: there he whirls
His firey-neighing ſteeds, that toſs their heads
Proud of their nodding plumes, eager to ruſh
Againſt the gates, and ſnorting champ their curbs

Boſs'd with barbaric pride. No mean device
Is ſculptur'd on his ſhield, A man in arms,
His ladder fix'd againſt the enemies' walls,
Mounts, reſolute to rend their rampires down;
And cries aloud, the letters plainly mark'd,
NOT MARS HIMSELF SHALL BEAT ME FROM THE TOW'RS.
Appoint of equal hardihood ſome chief
To guard the city from the ſervile yoke.

ETEOCLES.

Such ſhall I ſend, to conqueſt ſend him; one
That bears not in his hand this pageantry
Of martial pride. The hardy Megareus,
From Creon ſprung, and that bold race, which roſe
Embattled from the earth: him from the gates
The furious neighings of the firey ſteeds
Affright not; but his blood ſpilt on the earth
Amply requites the nouriture ſhe gave him,
Or captive both, the man in arms, the town
Storm'd on the ſculptur'd ſhield, and the proud bearer,
Shall with their ſpoils adorn his father's houſe.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Go then, and glory be thy guide!
For thee, brave youth, we pour this ardent pray'r,
And fav'ring Heav'n ſhall hear.
Go then, my houſe's guardian, go,
And ruſhing on the foe,
Bravely repel their vaunting pride.
And as each furious ſoul
Hurls the ferocious menace high,
May he, that rules the ſky,
In vengeance his indignant eye-balls roll!

SOLDIER.

At the next gate, nam'd from the martial Goddeſs
Onca Minerva, ſtands Hippomedon[c].

[c] Of the other gates we find no ſatisfactory account to lay before the reader: but the ſcholiaſt here obſerves, that Onca was one of the titles of Minerva at Thebes, which Cadmus introduced from Phœnicia, where ſhe was ſo called. The ſcholiaſt on the ſecond Olympic ode of Pindar aſſerts, that Cadmus erected at Ὄγκαι, a village in Bœotia, a ſtatue of Pallas, who was therefore worſhipped under the title of Ὀγκαία; ſee alſo the ſcholiaſt on Lycophron, v. 1225. She had two temples at Thebes, from which ſhe had two titles, Oncæa and Iſmenia; the latter certainly derived from the river Iſmenus. See Œdip. Tyr. Sophoclis, v. 20. on which the ſcholiaſt gives Ὀικαία by miſtake for Ογκαία. — R. P. JODRELL.

I heard his thund'ring voice, I ſaw his form
In bulk and ſtature proudly eminent;
I ſaw him roll his ſhield, large, maſſy, round,
Of broad circumference: it ſtruck my ſoul
With terror. On its orb no vulgar artiſt
Expreſs'd this image, A Typhæus huge,
Diſgorging from his foul embroulder'd jaws,
In fierce effuſion, wreaths of duſky ſmoke,
Signal of kindling flames: its bending verge
With folds of twiſted ſerpents border'd round.
With ſhouts the giant-chief provokes the war;
And in the ravings of outrageous valour
Glares terror from his eyes. Behoves thee then
Strong oppoſition to his firey rage,
Which at the gates e'en now ſpreads wild diſmay.

ETEOCLES.

Firſt, Onca Pallas, holding near the gates[f]
Her hallow'd ſtate, abhors his furious rage;

[f] The Scholiaſt on v. 170. interprets this to allude to a picture, perhaps a ſtatue of the protecting goddeſs placed at the entrance of the city, and quotes Lycophron for her name of Πόλιτις ſo acquired.—Alexan. l. 354.—whoſe Scholiaſt obſerves, that it has a ſymbolical meaning, and implied that wiſdom ſhould be always at their gates and doors.—R. P. JODRELL.

And

And in her guardian care ſhall cruſh the pride
Of this fell dragon. Then the ſon of Æneps,
Hyperbius, of prov'd and ſteady valour,
Shall man to man oppoſe him; one that dares
Aſſay his fate in the rough ſhock of battle;
In form, in ſpirit, and in martial arms
Conſummate; ſuch high grace Hermes confer'd.
In hoſtile arms thus man ſhall combat man,
And to the battle on their ſculptur'd ſhields
Bring adverſe Gods; the fierce Typhæus he,
Breathing forth flakes of fire; Hyperbius bears
The majeſty of Jove ſecurely thron'd,
Graſping his flaming bolt: and who e'er ſaw
The Thund'rer vanquiſh'd? In the fellowſhip
Of friendly Gods, the conquerors are with us,
They with the conquer'd; and with like event
Theſe warriors ſhall engage; as Jove in fight
Subdued the fell Typhæus, ſo his form
Emblazon'd on the ſhield ſhall guard Hyperbius.

CHORUS.

If ought of truth my ſoul inſpires,
This chief, that tow'ring o'er th' affrighted field
Bears on his ſculptur'd ſhield

Th' enormous monſter, buried deep
Beneath a mountainous heap
Rolling in vain his turbid fires,
Monſter accurs'd, abhor'd
By Gods above, by men below;
This chief his head ſhall bow
Low at the gate beneath the victor's ſword.

SOLDIER.

Prophetic be thy hopes. At the north gate,
Yet hear me, king, the fifth bold warrior takes
His ſtation, near the tomb where honour'd lies
Jove-born Amphion [g]: By his ſpear he ſwears,
Which, as he graſps, he dares to venerate [h]
More than a God, and dearer to his eyes

[g] Amphion, the ſon of Jupiter and Antiopa, having received a lute from Mercury, was ſo excellent a muſician, that according to the fable, he brought the ſtones together with which the tower of Thebes was built: hence Horace calls him Thebanæ conditor arcis.— R. P. JODRELL.

[h] Statius with more reaſon aſſigns this impiety to Capaneus, who is repreſented as a contemptor divum, like Mezentius: the one ſays, Virtus mihi numen, et enſis, quem teneo; the other

Dextra mihi deus, et telum, quod miſſile libro
Adſint.

Than

Than the ſweet light of Heav'n: by this he ſwears,
To level with the ground the walls of Thebes,
Tho' Jove himſelf oppoſe him. Thus exclaims
This beauteous branch ſprung from a mountain nymph [i],
Blooming in manly youth; the tender down
Of unripe age ſcarce ſprouting on his cheek;
But ruthleſs are his thoughts, cruel his eye
And proudly vaunting at the gate he takes
His terrible ſtand. Upon his claſhing ſhield,
Whoſe orb ſuſtains the ſtorm of war, he bears
The foul diſgrace of Thebes, a rav'nous ſphinx,
Fix'd to the plates; the burniſh'd monſter round
Pours a portentous gleam: beneath her lies
A Theban, mangled by her cruel fangs.
'Gainſt this let each brave arm direct the ſpear.
No hireling he, to proſtitute for gold [k]
The war, or ſhame the length of way he trod,
E'en from Arcadia: ſuch this ſtranger comes

[i] This mountain nymph was the Arcadian Atalanta.

[k] Οὐ καπηλίσειν μάχην. Ennius expreſſes the ſame idea under the ſame metaphor,

Non cauponantes bellum, ſed belligerantes.

Parthenopœus, and repays to Argos
Its hoſpitable honours, 'gainſt theſe tow'rs
Breathing proud menaces. The Gods avert them!

ETEOCLES.

That ruin, which their fierce aſpiring thoughts
With impious vaunts intend, may the juſt Gods
Turn on themſelves, total defeat, and ſhame;
So let them periſh! To this proud Arcadian
No boaſter we oppoſe; but one whoſe hand
Knows its rough work, Actor, the valiant brother
Of him laſt named. Never will he permit
The tongue, without th' aſſay of warlike deeds,
To ruſh within the gates, and execute
Its ruinous threats; nor him, whoſe hoſtile ſhield
Bears ſculptur'd that abhor'd and rav'ning beaſt:
And many' a thund'ring ſtroke with ſtern rebuke
Shall check her proud advances to the walls.
Soon ſhall the fav'ring Gods confirm theſe hopes.

CHORUS.

Theſe words appal my throbbing breaſt:
And the light tangles of my braided hair
Riſe upright with my fear,

As

As from the impious foes around
Their dreadful voices sound,
Furious with thund'ring threats expreſt.
Ye pow'rs, that rule on high,
Scatter their dreadful forces wide,
Or let their creſted pride
Low in the duſt beneath our rampires lie!

SOLDIER.

The ſixth brave chief, that with the golden curb
Of prudence knows to check his gen'rous valour,
The fate-foretelling ſeer, Amphiaraus[1],

At

[1] This modeſt and amiable augur had foretold the ill ſucceſs of the war, and the death of all the chiefs, Adraſtus only excepted; he would therefore have concealed himſelf, but was betrayed by his wife Eriphyle, who had paſſionately deſired ſome female ornament, which Polynices had given to Argia upon the day of their marriage: this was a necklace, or rather a ceſtus, the work of Vulcan, and by him preſented to Harmonia when ſhe wedded Cadmus, and had been fatal to her, to Semele, and to Jocaſta. See Statius, l. 2. v. 272, &c.

Sic Eriphyleos aurum fatale penates
Irrupit, ſcelerumque ingentia ſemina movit,
Et grave Tyſiphone riſit gaviſa futuris.

As Amphiaraus was fighting bravely, the earth opened beneath him, and he deſcended alive to the infernal regions with

At th' Omolæan gate [m] his deſtin'd poſt
Aſſumes in arms, and on the firey Tydeus
Throws many' a keen reproach, reviles him as
An homicide, the troubler of the ſtate
The mighty author of all ill to Argos,
With murder and the furies at his heels
Urging Adraſtus to theſe hateful deeds.
Thy brother Polynices, with him leagued
In theſe deſpiteful deeds, he blames aloud,
Deſcants upon his name, and thus rebukes him,
How grateful to the Gods muſt this deed be,
Glorious to hear, and in the roll of fame
Shining to diſtant ages, thus to lead
Theſe foreign arms to waſte thy bleeding country,
To raze thoſe princely manſions, where thy fathers,
Heroes and demigods, once held their ſeats!
But ſay thy cauſe be juſt, will juſtice dry

with all his arms, and in his chariot. Statius has exerted the utmoſt force of his genius in deſcribing this righteous hero.

[m] The Theſſalians gave the feaſts of Ceres the name of Omolôia, des deux mots, Omou enſemble, and Lôion meilleur, excellent.—Hiſtoire religieuſe du Calandrier, par M. Court de Gebelin. The Scholiaſt tells us, that theſe gates were ſo called from Omolois, a daughter of Niobe.

Thy

Thy mother's tears? And when the furious ſpear,
Hurl'd by thy hand, ſhall pierce thy country's bolom,
Will ſhe with friendly arms again receive thee?
Præſcient of fate I ſhall enrich this ſoil,
Sunk in the hoſtile plain. But let us fight.
One thing at leaſt is mine: I will not find
A vulgar, or diſhonourable death.
So ſpoke the prophet; and with aweful port
Advanc'd his maſſy ſhield, the ſhining orb
Bearing no impreſs: for his gen'rous ſoul
Wiſhes to be, not to appear, the beſt;
And from the culture of his modeſt worth
Bears the rich fruit of great and glorious deeds.
Him let the virtuous and the wiſe oppoſe;
For dreadful is the foe that fears the Gods.

ETEOCLES.

I mourn the deſtiny, that blends the juſt
With theſe unhallow'd wretches. Nothing worſe
In whate'er cauſe, than impious fellowſhip;
Nothing of good is reap'd; for when the field
Is ſown with wrong, the ripen'd fruit is death.
If with a deſperate band, whoſe hearts are hot

With

With villany, the pious hoiſts his ſails,
The vengeance of the Gods burſts on the bark
And ſinks him with the heav'n-deteſted crew.
If 'midſt a race, inhoſpitably bent
On ſavage deeds, regardleſs of the Gods,
The juſt man fix his ſeat, th' impending wrath
Spares not, but ſtrikes him with vindictive fury,
Cruſh'd in the general ruin. So this ſeer,
Of temper'd wiſdom, of unſullied honour,
Juſt, good, and pious, and a mighty prophet,
In deſpite to his better judgment join'd
With men of impious daring, bent to tread
The long, irremeable way, with them
Shall, if high Jove aſſiſt us, be drag'd down
To joint perdition. Ne'er ſhall he advance
Againſt our gates, with-held not by baſe fear,
Or cowardice of ſoul; but that he knows
His fate, if Phœbus ought of truth foretells,
To fall in fight: he loves then to be ſilent,
Since what the time demands he cannot ſpeak.
Yet him againſt the ſtrength of Laſthenes,
Who from the ſtranger's inroad guards our gates,
Shall I oppoſe: in manhood's vig'rous prime
He bears the providence of age; his eye

Quick

Quick as the lightning's glance; before his ſhield
Flames his protended ſpear [n], and longs t' obey
His hand. But victory is the gift of Heav'n.

CHORUS.

That gift, ye great immortal pow'rs,
On the brave guardians of our ſtate beſtow;
On each victorious brow
The radiant honour bind! Oh, hear
A virgin's pious pray'r;
Chaſe the proud ſtrangers from our tow'rs;
Or headlong let them fall,
Thy red right hand, almighty ſire,
Rolling its vengeful fire,
In flaming ruin ſtretch'd beneath our wall!

SOLDIER.

The ſeventh bold chief—Forgive me that I name
Thy brother, and relate the horrible vows,
The imprecations, which his rage pours forth
Againſt the city; on fire to mount the walls,

[n] Amidſt the obſcurity of this paſſage, and the uncertainty of the annotators, the tranſlator has ſelected that idea, which ſeems moſt poetical.

And

And from their turrets to this land proclaim,
Rending its echoes with the ſong of war,
Captivity: to meet thee ſword to ſword,
Kill thee, then die upon thee: if thou liveſt,
T' avenge on thee his exile and diſgrace
With the like treatment. Thund'ring vengeance thus
The rage of Polynices calls the Gods,
Preſiding o'er his country, to look down,
And aid his vows. His well-orb'd ſhield he holds,
New-wrought, and with a double impreſs charg'd:
A warrior, blazing all in golden arms,
A female form of modeſt aſpect leads,
Expreſſing juſtice, as th' inſcription ſpeaks,
YET ONCE MORE TO HIS COUNTRY, AND ONCE MORE
TO HIS PATERNAL THRONE I WILL RESTORE HIM.
Such their devices. But th' important taſk,
Whom to oppoſe againſt his force, is thine.
Let not my words offend: I but relate,
Do thou command; for thou art ſovereign here.

ETEOCLES.

ETEOCLES.

How dreadful is the hatred of the Gods °!
Unhappy ſons of Œdipus, your fate
Claims many' a tear. Ah me! my father's curſe
Now ſtamps its vengeance deep. But to lament,
Or ſigh, or ſhed the tear, becomes me not,
Leſt more intolerable grief ariſe.
Be Polynices told, ill-omen'd name,
Soon ſhall we ſee how far his blazon'd ſhield
Avails; how far inſcriptions wrought in gold,
With all their futile vauntings, will reſtore him.
If juſtice, virgin daughter of high Jove,
Had ever form'd his mind, or rul'd his actions,

° At the mention of each of the other chiefs Eteocles had ſhown himſelf unmoved, and given his orders with calmneſs and prudence; nay, his reflections on Amphiaraus have a ſolemn air of religion: but no ſooner is his brother named, than he loſes all temper; he begins indeed as if he would lament the unhappy fate of his family, but ſoon ſtarts from that idea, and though himſelf the aggreſſor, reviles his brother as inſolent, outrageous, and unjuſt from his infancy; then in the ſpirit of a man that has done an injury, who never forgives, works himſelf up to that ungoverned rage, which deſtroyed his brother, himſelf, and all the unhappy family of Œdipus.

This

This might have been: but neither when his eyes
First ſaw the light of life; nor in the growth
Of infancy; nor in th' advancing years
Of youth; nor in the riper age, that clothes
With gradual down the manly cheek, did juſtice
E'er deign t' inſtruct, or mark him for her own.
Nor now, I ween, in this his fell intent
To cruſh his country will her preſence aid him:
For juſtice were not juſtice, ſhou'd ſhe favour
Th' injurious outrage of his daring ſpirit.
In this confiding I will meet his arms
In armed oppoſition: Who more fit?
Chief ſhall engage with chief, with brother brother,
And foe with foe. Haſte, arm me for the fight,
Bring forth my greaves, my hauberk, my ſtrong ſpear.

CHORUS.

Dear to thy country, ſon of Œdipus,
Be not thy rage like his, whom we abhor.
Thebes has no dearth of valiant ſons t' oppoſe
Theſe Argives; and their blood may be aton'd;

The

The death of brothers by each other ſlain,
That ſtain no expiation can atone.

ETEOCLES.

Cou'd man endure defeat without diſhonour,
'Twere well: but to the dead nothing remains,
Save glory: to the daſtard, and the baſe
Fame never pays that honourable meed.

CHORUS.

Ah, whither doſt thou ruſh? Let not revenge,
That wildly raving ſhakes the furious ſpear,
Tranſport thee thus. Check this hot tide of paſſion.

ETEOCLES.

No: ſince the God impels me, I will on.
And let the race of Laius, let them all,
Abhor'd by Phœbus, in this ſtorm of fate
Sink down to deep Cocytus' dreary flood.

CHORUS.

Cruel and murd'rous is the rage that fires thee
To deeds of death, to unpermitted blood;
And ſorrow is the bitter fruit it yields.

ETEOCLES.

My father's curſe, a ſtern relentleſs fury,
Rolling her tearleſs eyes, looks on and tells me
Glory purſues her prize, diſdaining fate.

CHORUS.

Ah, rave not thus: Fame will not call thee baſe
Or cowardly, if well thy life be order'd.
The gloomy fury enters not his houſe,
Whoſe hands preſent th' accepted ſacrifice.

ETEOCLES.

The Gods accept not us; and on our fall
Glory attends admiring: Why then ſue
For grace, with ſervile fear cringing to death?

CHORUS.

For that it is at hand: its terrible pow'r
Sooth'd by th' abatement of this firey valour,
May come perchance more gentle; now it rages.

ETEOCLES.

My father's imprecations rage, and haunt
My ſleep: too true the real viſions riſe,

And

And wave the bloody ſword that parts his kingdoms.

CHORUS.

Let us perſuade thee, tho' thou ſcorn'ſt our ſex.

ETEOCLES.

What wou'd thy wiſh have done? Speak it in brief.

CHORUS.

Ah, go not this way: go not to this gate.

ETEOCLES.

My ſoul's on fire; nor ſhall thy words retard me.

CHORUS.

Conqueſt, that ſpurns at right, offends the Gods.

ETEOCLES.

Ill ſuit theſe tame words the arm'd warrior's ear.

CHORUS.

And canſt thou wiſh to ſpill thy brother's blood?

ETEOCLES.

By the juſt Gods he ſhall not 'ſcape my vengeance [p].

CHORUS.

She comes, the fierce tremendous pow'r [q],
And harrows up my ſoul with dread;
No gentle Goddeſs, prompt to ſhow'r
Her bleſſings on ſome favour'd head.

I know

[p] The Engliſh reader will allow, that in variety of character and dignity of expreſſion this is one of the fineſt ſcenes ever produced by dramatic author. The devices on the ſhields, the ſpirit of the warriors, and the defiance of Eteocles, all proclaim that wonderful δεινότης, or tragic ſublimity, which characteriſed Æſchylus. What can we think then of the unfeeling criticiſm of P. Brumoy? who ſays, Cette ſcene eſt fort longue, et n'a pu être intereſſante que pour les Atheniens qui connoiſſoient Thebes, et les chefs, dont on va parler.—R. P. JODRELL.

[q] As ſoon as Œdipus came to be informed that he had killed his father Laius, and that Jocaſta, by whom he had two ſons and two daughters, was his mother, in the tranſport of his grief he tore out his eyes. When his ſons were grown up to man's eſtate, they ſhut up their father now old and blind, and agreed to divide his kingdom between them: Œdipus deeply reſented this treatment, and uttered the moſt horrid execrations againſt them, praying that they might divide the kingdom

I know her now, the propheteſs of ill,
And vengeance ratifies each word,
The votive fury, fiend abhor'd;
The father's curſes to fulfill
Dreadful ſhe comes, and with her brings
The brood of fate, that laps the blood of kings.

The rude barbarian, from the mines
Of Scythia, o'er the lots preſides;
Ruthleſs to each his ſhare aſſigns,
And the conteſted realm divides:

kingdom by the ſword. Statius knew how to make a fine uſe of this. How fatal a father's curſe was eſteemed, we have ſeen in the Prometheus. To prevent its dreaded effects, the brothers agreed to reign each a year alternately, and each alternately to leave the kingdom: Eteocles, as the elder, firſt aſſumed the ſovereignty; but upon the expiration of his year refuſed to reſign it to his brother: hence this war, their father's prophetic curſe, which is greatly repreſented through this tragedy as an avenging fury: even the ſword is perſonified, and repreſented as a rude barbarian from the mines of Scythia, and advancing over the ſeas, attended with miſchief and war, as a cruel umpire to divide the kingdom between the brothers, but aſſigning to each no larger a ſhare than their dead bodies could occupy on the earth. Theſe are the conceptions of a genius truly ſublime, and which diſtinguiſh Æſchylus and Shakeſpear from all other writers.

To each allots no wider a domain
Than, on the cold earth as they lie,
Their breathleſs bodies occupy,
Regardleſs of an ampler reign.
Such narrow compaſs does the ſword,
A cruel umpire, their high claims afford.

Conflicting thus in furious mood,
Shou'd each by other's hand be ſlain;
Shou'd the black fountain of their blood
Spout forth, and drench the thirſty plain;
Who ſhall the ſolemn expiation pay?
Who with pure lavers cleanſe the dead?
Miſeries to miſeries thus ſucceed,
And vengeance marks this houſe her prey,
Swift to chaſtiſe the firſt ill deed;
And the ſon's ſons in her deep fury bleed.

The firſt ill deed from Laius ſprung:
Thrice from his ſhrine theſe words of fate
Aweful the Pythian Phœbus ſung,
"Die childleſs, wou'dſt thou ſave the ſtate."

Urg'd

Urg'd by his friends, as round the free wine flows,
To Love's forbidden rites he flies.
By the ſon's hand the father dies.
He in the chaſte ground, whence he aroſe,
Was bold t' implant the deadly root;
And madneſs rear'd each baleful-ſpreading ſhoot.

Wide o'er misfortune's ſurging tide
Billows ſucceeding billows ſpread;
Shou'd one, its fury ſpent, ſubſide,
Another lifts its boiſt'rous head,
And foams around the city's ſhatter'd prow.
But ſhou'd the rough tempeſtuous wave
Force thro' our walls too ſlight to ſave,
And lay the thin partition low,
Will not the flood's reſiſtleſs ſway
Sweep kings and people, town and realms away?

The dreadful curſe pronounc'd of old
To vengeance rouſes ruthleſs hate;
And ſlaughter, ranging uncontrol'd,
Purſues the hideous work of fate.

Wreck'd in the ſtorm the great, the brave, the wiſe
Are ſunk beneath the roaring tide.
Such was the chief, this city's pride,
Dear to each God in yon' bright ſkies,
Whoſe prudence took our dread away,
The rav'ning monſter gorg'd with human prey.

Where now the chief? His glories where?
Fall'n, fall'n. From the polluted bed
Indignant madneſs, wild deſpair,
And agonizing grief ſucceed.
The light of Heav'n, himſelf, his ſons abhor'd,
Darkling he feeds his gloomy rage,
Bids them, with many' a curſe, engage,
And part their empire with the ſword.
That curſe now holds its unmov'd ſtate,
The furious fiend charg'd with the work of fate.

SOLDIER, CHORUS.

SOLDIER.

Have comfort, virgins, your fond parents' joy;
The city hath eſcap'd the ſervile yoke,

And

And the proud vaunts of theſe impetuous men
Are fall'n: the ſtorm is ceas'd, and the rough waves,
That threaten'd to o'erwhelm us, are ſubſided.
Our tow'rs ſtand firm, each well-appointed chief
Guarded his charge with manly fortitude.
All at ſix gates is well: but at the ſeventh
The God, to whom that myſtic number's ſacred [r],
Royal

[r] Ἑβδομαγέτας Ἀπόλλων.——ἑβδόμη, ἱερὸν ἦμαρ,
Τῇ γὰρ Ἀπόλλωνα χρυσάορα γείνατο Λητώ.

Heſiod tells us here that the ſeventh is a ſacred day, becauſe on that day Latona brought forth Apollo with the golden ſword, M. Court de Gebelin ſays with the golden hair, à chevelure dorée. That the ſeventh day of each month was ſacred to Apollo, becauſe he was born on that day, was true only in the allegorical ſenſe: this was taken from the philoſophical ideas of the Egyptians, brought into Greece by Pythagoras, reſpecting the harmony of the univerſe, founded on the ſeven planets and their relations, and in general upon the number ſeven. Nonnus gives the planets the ſame arrangements which they have in the muſical ſyſtem of the Egyptians, where the ſun placed in the fourth rank, or in the middle of the progreſſion, terminates and begins the two quaternions, or fours, that form the ſyſtem.—Gebelin's Allegories orientales, p. 90. Milton knew how to make the fineſt uſe of this idea of the harmony of the ſpheres,

How often from the ſteep
Of echoing hill, or thicket, have we heard
Celeſtial

Royal Apollo, took his aweful ſtand,
Repaying on the race of Œdipus
The ill-advis'd tranſgreſſion of old Laius.

CHORUS.

What new affliction hath befall'n the city?

SOLDIER.

The city is preſerv'd: the brother kings
Are fall'n, each ſlaughter'd by the other's hand.

CHORUS.

Who? What? Thy words diſtract my ſenſe with fear.

SOLDIER.

Be calm, and hear. The ſons of Œdipus.

Celeſtial voices, to the midnight air
(Sole, or reſponſive to each other's note)
Singing their great creator? oft in bands
While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk,
With heav'nly touch of inſtrumental ſounds,
In *full harmonic number* join'd, their ſongs
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to heav'n.
P. L. b. iv. l. 680.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Ah me! I am the propheteſs of ill.

SOLDIER.

It is indeed too certain: both are dead.

CHORUS.

Came they to this? 'Tis horrible; yet tell me.

SOLDIER.

Brother by brother's hands dreadfully ſlain.

CHORUS.

And has one common fate involv'd them both?

SOLDIER.

It has indeed deſtroy'd th' unhappy race.
Here then is cauſe for lamentation, cauſe
For joy: joy, that the city ſtands ſecure;
But lamentation, that the chiefs are fall'n.
To both the rigid ſteel, forg'd in the mines
Of Scythia, ſhares their whole inheritance;
And each receives but that ſmall tract of earth,
Which ſerves him for a tomb; their father's curſe,

Fatally

Fatally cruel, ſweeps them both away.
The city is preſerv'd; but the duſt drinks
The blood of the' brothers, each by th' other ſlain.

CHORUS.

MONOSTROPHE.

O Jove ſupreme,
And all ye Gods that guard this ſtate,
Shou'd I the joyful Pæan raiſe,
And celebrate your praiſe?
Your guardian care, propitious pow'rs,
Preſerv'd our walls, preſerv'd our tow'rs!
Or bid the ſolemn, doleful ſtrain
Lament the chiefs, the brothers ſlain;
A mournful theme;
Thro' mad ambition's impious pride
Childleſs, unbleſs'd, in youth's warm tide
Fall'n, fall'n by too ſevere a fate?

STROPHE.

Thou gloomy curſe, too prompt to ill,
A father's vengeance to fulfill,
I feel, I feel thee in my ſhiv'ring breaſt!

Soon as I heard th' unhappy ſlain
Lay welt'ring on th' enſanguin'd plain,
With inſpiration's raging pow'r poſſeſt,
I form'd the funeral ſtrains to flow
With all the melody of woe.

ANTISTROPHE.

Thou fell, ill-omen'd, cruel ſpear,
Cou'dſt thou the father's curſes hear,
And wing'd with fury drink the brother's gore?
Now, Laius, boaſt the frantic deed:
Thy diſobedience has its meed;
The fatal oracle delays no more.
Theſe are your works; and round them ſtand
Horrors, and death's avenging band.

EPODE.

Is this a tale of fear-created woe?
In very deed before our eyes

[The dead bodies of ETEOCLES and POLYNICES are here brought on the Stage.

A twofold ſcene of miſery lies,
And from a double ſlaughter double horrors flow;

Whilſt

Whilſt grief on grief, and groan on groan
Ruſh in, and make this houſe their own.
Come then, ye virgins, form the mournful bands,
To wail the mighty ſlain;
And ever and anon, at each ſad pauſe
The dying cadence draws,
Together ſmite your high-rais'd hands,
The ſullen ſound attemper'd to the ſtrain,
That with many' a diſmal note
Accompanies the ſable boat,
Slow as its ſails on Acheron's dull ſtream,
Wafting its joyleſs numbers o'er
To that unlovely, dreary ſhore,
Which Phœbus never views, nor the light's golden beam.

1ſt SEMICHORUS.

But ſee, to aid this mournful office come
Antigone and Iſmene: they beſure
Will, from their lovely gentleneſs of ſoul,
Pour for their brothers' loſs their ſorrows wild.
Behoves us then, e'er the ſad tale ſhall reach

Their

Their ear, with meet ſolemnity to raiſe
The thrilling ſtrain, and chaunt the hymn of death.

2d SEMICHORUS.

Unhappy in your brothers, moſt unhappy
Of all, that o'er their ſwelling boſoms bind
The decent veſt, I weep, I breath the ſigh
Warm from my heart, that feels for your afflictions.

ANTIGONE, ISMENE, CHORUS.

1ſt SEMICHORUS.

Ah, what frantic rage poſſeſt
Each unyielding, ruthleſs breaſt,
Wiſdom ſcorn'd, and friends defy'd,
By threat'ning ills unterrify'd,
'Gainſt their father's houſe to bear
Wretched they, the fatal ſpear!

2d SEMICHORUS.

Wretched they a wretched death
Found their houſe's fall beneath.

1ſt SEMICHORUS.

Each the ruin'd palace o'er
Strove t' extend his envied pow'r:
Each unrival'd and alone
Proudly ſtrove to ſeize the throne.
But the ſword their conteſt ends,
Not the lovely ſtrife of friends.
Hate, that never knows remorſe,
Fury of the father's curſe,
Thro' their ſides with horrid ſway
Urg'd the ſharp ſteel's purple way.

2d SEMICHORUS.

Charg'd with death thou cruel curſe,
Each hath felt thy fatal force.

1ſt SEMICHORUS.

Brother pierc'd by brother dies,
Low their houſe in ruin lies.

2d SEMICHORUS.

From the father's furious breath
Diſcord roſe, and rage, and death.

1ſt SEMICHORUS.

Grief with wild, diſtracted air
Thro' the city leads deſpair;
The tow'rs on high, the vales below,
Sigh the ſullen notes of woe.
To other lords the large domains,
And the envied pow'r remains;
Of the territories wide,
For which they fought, for which they died,
Each receives an equal ſhare,
Fiercely parted by the ſpear:
Cruel arbiter of fate,
Friends thy rude deciſions hate.

2d SEMICHORUS.

Pierc'd with ſteel each finds his end:
Pierc'd with ſteel they haſte t' attend
Their fathers, by like bloody death,
In the yawning grave beneath.

1ſt SEMICHORUS.

Grief, that rends the tortur'd breaſt,
Deep with real woes poſſeſt,

Tears faſt ſtreaming from her eyes
From the haunts of pleaſure flies,
Anguiſh, miſery all her own,
Sadly pours the hollow groan;
Whilſt the ruin'd palace round
Echo anſwers to the ſound;
And, each frightful pauſe between,
From her airy ſhell unſeen,
Liſtens to the funeral ſtrain,
Wailing the unhappy ſlain;
Wailing all the dreadful woes
That from madding diſcord roſe;
Many' a friend among the dead,
Whilſt the hoſtile legions bleed.

2d SEMICHORUS.

Far beyond each ſorrowing dame,
Each that bears a mother's name,
Each that groans upon the earth,
Hapleſs ſhe that gave them birth.
She, to ſhare her bed and throne,
As an huſband took her ſon:
Theſe ſhe bore, and this their fate,
Brother ſlain by brother's hate.

ISMENE.

ISMENE.

Brothers they, by birth allied,
Spread the mutual carnage wide:
Unfriendly each to other's life,
In the madding rage of ſtrife.
But their hatred is no more,
On the earth, all ſtain'd with gore,
Their ſtream of life unites, and ſhows
From one common ſource it roſe.

CHORUS.

Umpire of the ſtrife of kings,
Forth the barbarous ſtranger ſprings:
Ruthleſs iſſuing from the flame
O'er the ſeas the keen ſteel came.
Ruthleſs came the realm to ſhare,
Big with miſchief, waſting war,
And accurs'd, without remorſe,
Executes a father's curſe.

ANTIGONE.

They have the wretched ſhare they choſe,
Share of heav'n-appointed woes*:

* This paſſage is inexplicably obſcure. The tranſlator is obliged to leave it ſo.

And the rich, conteſted prize
Deep beneath earth's boſom lies.

ISMENE.

It falls, the royal houſe, it falls;
Ruin lords it o'er its walls;
And the furies howl around,
Notes of ſhrill, ſoul-piercing ſound.
Slaughter, reeking yet with gore,
Raiſes high each gate before,
Where they fought, and where they bled,
Trophies of the mighty dead;
And, the rival chiefs ſubdued,
Ceaſes from her work of blood.

ANTIGONE.

Wounded thou gaveſt the fatal wound.

ISMENE.

Dying thy hand its vengeance found.

ANTIGONE.

By the ſpear 'twas thine to kill.

ISMENE.

And the ſpear's thy blood to ſpill.

ANTIGONE.

Fierce thy thought, and fell thy deed.

ISMENE.

Fierce recoil'd it on thy head.

ANTIGONE.

Flow my tears.

ISMENE.

My ſorrows flow.

ANTIGONE.

He, that ſlew, ſhall lie as low.
Madneſs mingles with my moans.

ISMENE.

Heaves my heart, and burſts with groans.

ANTIGONE.

Thou ſhalt claim the ceaſeleſs tear.

ISMENE.

To my ſoul waſt thou moſt dear.

ANTIGONE.

Thee thy friend ſtretch'd on the plain.

ISMENE.

And by thee thy friend is ſlain.

ANTIGONE.

Twice to ſee.

ISMENE.

And twice to tell.

ANTIGONE.

Near us do theſe ſorrows dwell.

ISMENE.

Near us dwell theſe ſorrows, near
As to ſiſters brothers are.

ANTIGONE.

Fate, in all thy terrors clad,
Œdipus, thy aweful ſhade,
Erinnys, frowning black as night,
Dreadful, dreadful is your might!

ISMENE.

Fierce from flight atchiev'd he deeds,
At which my heart with anguiſh bleeds.

ANTIGONE.

Nor is he return'd that ſlew.

ISMENE.

Safe himſelf, on death he flew.

ANTIGONE.

Death upon himſelf he brought.

ISMENE.

And to him deſtruction wrought.

ANTIGONE.

Sprung from an unhappy line.

ISMENE.

In one unhappy fate they join.

ANTIGONE.

Mournful, threefold miſery.

ISMENE.

Sad to tell.

ANTIGONE.

And ſad to ſee.

Fate in all thy terrors clad,
Œdipus, thy aweful ſhade,

Erinnys, frowning black as night,
Dreadful, dreadful is your might!
Thou their pow'r haſt paſt, haſt known.

ISMENE.

Soon this knowledge was thy own.

ANTIGONE.

To the town advancing near.

ISMENE.

Lifting high thy purple ſpear,
Burning fierce with enmity.

ANTIGONE.

Sad to tell.

ISMENE.

And ſad to ſee.

ANTIGONE.

Ah, what woes on us await!

ISMENE.

And our houſe oppreſs'd with fate:
Thro' the land the evils ſpread,
Falling heavieſt on my head.

ANTIGONE.

I th' afflicting burden ſhare,
Equal ſorrow, equal care.

ISMENE.

Eteocles, from thee it flows,
Author of theſe mournful woes.

ANTIGONE.

Each the guſhing tear demands.

ISMENE.

Each with frenzy arm'd his hands.

ANTIGONE.

Where ſhall we with pious care
The ſepulchral earth prepare?

ISMENE.

Where the hallow'd ground ſhall ſpread
Aweful honours o'er the dead.

ANTIGONE.

Their unhappy father nigh
Let the mournful ruins lie.

ANTIGONE, ISMENE, CHORUS, HERALD,

HERALD.

My office leads me to proclaim the mandate
Of the great rulers of the Theban ſtate.
Eteocles, for that he lov'd his country,
They have decreed with honour to inter.
To ſhield her from her foes he fought, he fell,
Her ſacred rites rever'd, unſtain'd with blame,
Where glory calls the valiant youth to bleed,
He bled. Thus far of him am I bid ſay.
Of Polynices, that his corpſe ſhall lie
Caſt out unburied, to the dogs a prey;
Becauſe his ſpear, had not the Gods oppos'd,
Threaten'd deſtruction to the lands of Thebes.
In death the vengeance of his country's Gods
Purſues him, for he ſcorn'd them, and preſum'd
To lead a foreign hoſt, and ſtorm the town.
Be this then his reward, to lie expos'd
To rav'nous birds, unhonour'd, of the rites[1]
That

[1] To be deprived of the rites of ſepulture was to the ancients the greateſt of all calamities, much worſe than death itſelf. Euripides has a fine tragedy, the whole diſtreſs of which turns

That grace the dead, libations at the tomb,
The ſolemn ſtrain, that 'midſt the exequies
Breathes from the friendly voice of woe, depriv'd.
Theſe are the mandates of the Theban rulers.

ANTIGONE.

And to theſe Theban rulers I declare,
If none beſides dare bury him, myſelf
Will do that office, heedleſs of the danger,
And think no ſhame to diſobey the ſtate,
Paying the laſt ſad duties to a brother.
Nature has tender ties, and ſtrongly joins
The offspring of the ſame unhappy mother,
And the ſame wretched father. In this taſk
Shrink not, my ſoul, to ſhare the ills he ſuffer'd,
Involuntary ills; and whilſt life warms

turns upon this idea; a tranſlation of this will ſhortly be given to the public, and the reader may expect to find the ſubject more fully examined.—As the Chorus were by their office to be exact obſervers of the laws religious and civil, their taſk was here very nice and difficult. Not to aſſiſt in burying the dead, were impious: not to obey the mandates of their rulers, were an offence againſt the laws of their country: the poet with great judgment leaves this intereſting point undetermined, in the only manner that remained not to give offence.

This

This breaſt, be bold to ſhow a ſiſter's love
To a dead brother. Shall the famiſh'd wolves
Fatten on him? Away with ſuch a thought.
I, tho' a woman, will prepare his tomb,
Dig up the earth, and bear it in this boſom,
In theſe fine folds to cover him. Go to.
I will not be oppos'd. Fruitful invention
Shall deviſe means to execute the taſk.

HERALD.

I charge thee not t' offend the ſtate in this.

ANTIGONE.

I charge thee waſte not words on me in vain.

HERALD.

Rage ſoon inflames a people freed from danger.

ANTIGONE.

Inflame them thou, he ſhall not lie unburied.

HERALD.

Wilt thou thus grace the object of their hate?

ANTIGONE.

Long have they ſtrove to load him with diſhonour.

HERALD.

Not till he ſhook this land with hoſtile arms.

ANTIGONE.

ANTIGONE.

Great were his wrongs, and greatly he reveng'd them.

HERALD.

Injur'd by one, his vengeance burſt on all.

ANTIGONE.

Diſcord, the meaneſt of the Gods, will do
What ſhe reſolves; ſpare then thy tedious ſpeech,
And be aſſur'd that I will bury him.

HERALD.

Self-will'd, and unadvis'd! I muſt declare this.

ANTIGONE, ISMENE, CHORUS.

1ſt SEMICHORUS.

With what a ruthleſs and deſtructive rage
The Furies hurl their vengeful ſhafts around,
And deſolate the houſe of Œdipus!
What then remains for me? and how reſolve?
Can I forbear to mourn thee, to attend thee
To the ſad tomb? Yet duty to the ſtate,
And reverence to its mandates, awes my ſoul.

Thou

Thou [u] ſhalt have many to lament thy fall:
Whilſt he [x], unwept, unpitied, unattended,
Save by a ſiſter's ſolitary ſorrows,
Sinks to the ſhades. Approve you this reſolve?

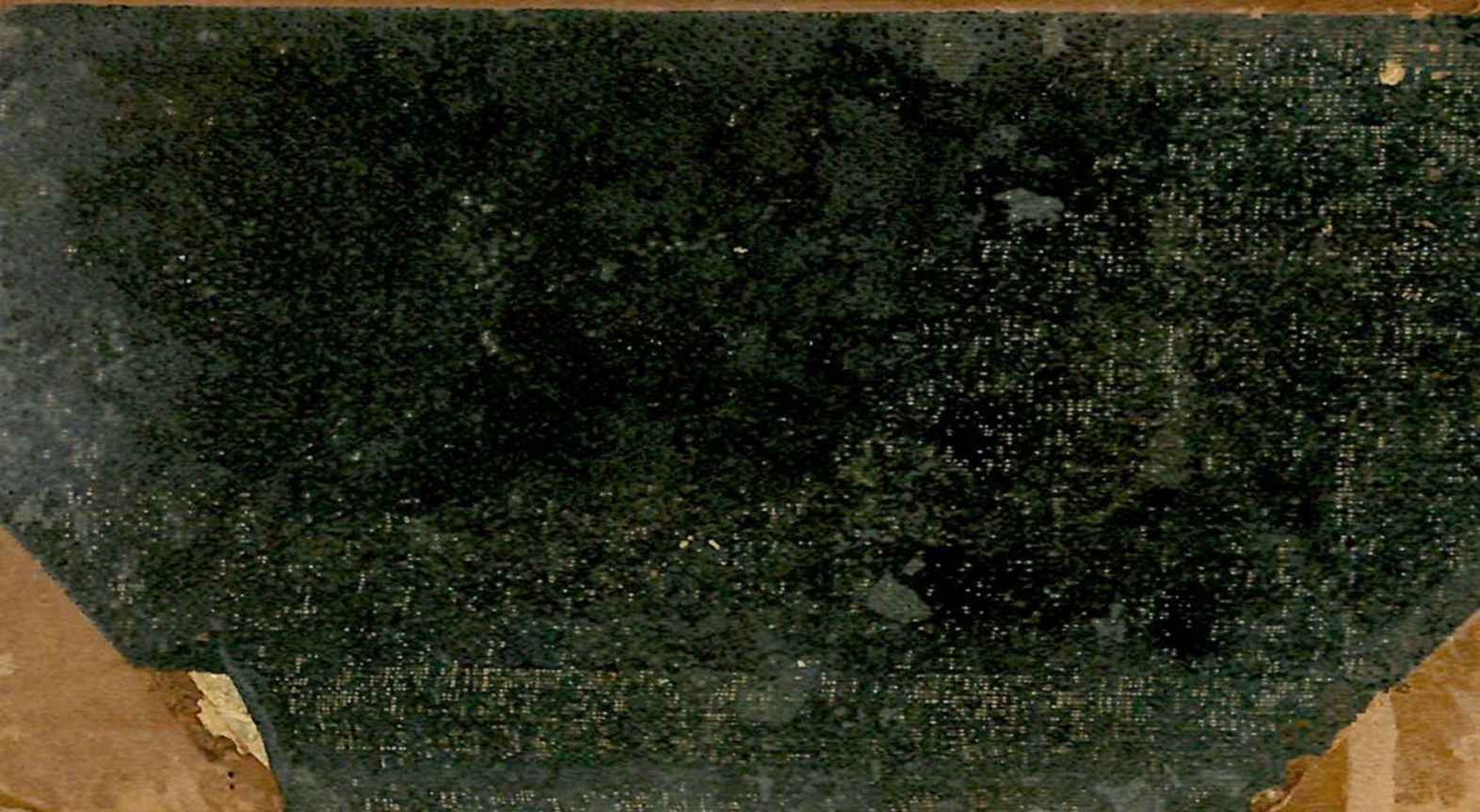
2d SEMICHORUS.

To thoſe, that wail the fate of Polynices,
Let the ſtate act its pleaſure. We will go,
Attend his funeral rites, and aid his ſiſter
To place him in the earth. Such ſorrows move
The common feelings of humanity;
And, where the deed is juſt, the ſtate approves it.

1ſt SEMICHORUS.

And we with him, as juſtice and the ſtate
Concur to call us. Next th' immortal Gods,
And Jove's high pow'r, this valiant youth came forth
The guardian of his country, and repell'd
Th' aſſault of foreign foes, whoſe raging force
Ruſh'd like a torrent threat'ning to o'erwhelm us.

[u] Eteocles. [x] Polynices.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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